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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the career development experiences of three female former presidents who were the first to have served in a southeastern community college system. In order to present more personal and historical information about these women, the author selected sociological multiple life history as the methodology for the study. Through in-depth interviews, the three former presidents shared their career development experiences and identified the factors and circumstances which influenced their pursuit of the presidency. Major findings were that a combination of family support, educational nurturing, the development of self-confidence and self-esteem, and the resilience to succeed despite impediments they encountered as adults were important influences in their career success. Especially important were mentoring and role modeling relationships because they helped the former presidents develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Barriers, such as gender stereotyping and the selection of sameness, were also found to inhibit women's access to senior leadership positions. Appendices include the interview protocol. Contains over 400 references. (JA)

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A SOCIOLOGICAL MULTIPLE LIFE HISTORY STUDY OF THREE FEMALE FORMER COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS IN A SOUTHEASTERN SYSTEM

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A. Ballentine

by

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ANGELA RENÉ BALLENTINE

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Charles and Audrey Ballentine, who instilled in me a passion for learning and taught me the value of perseverance, even when the odds are against you.

ABSTRACT

BALLENTINE, ANGELA RENÉ. A Sociological Multiple Life History Study of Three Female Former Community College Presidents in a Southeastern System. (Under the direction of James L. Burrow and Peter Hessling.)

A review of the literature revealed that the 1990s witnessed the largest increase in the numbers of female presidents of higher education institutions than in any decade in history. The literature has established a need to present more personal and historical information about women who have served as community college presidents. No recent qualitative study has presented the career development experiences of female former community college presidents. Nor has a life history approach been used to examine the factors and circumstances influencing female presidents' decision to seek the community college presidency. If women are to continue increasing their representation in senior leadership of higher education institutions, understanding the career development experiences of women who have served in that role is important.

This study's purpose was to examine the career development experiences of three female former presidents who were the first to have served in a southeastern community college system. The methodology selected for the study was sociological multiple life history. Through in-depth interviews, the three former presidents shared their self-perceptions of their career development experiences and identified the factors and circumstances that influenced their pursuit of the presidency.

The stories were presented in the participants' own words, so as to capture the essence of the narratives and to add continuity and cohesiveness to the retelling of their experiences. Data generated from the interviews revealed the following themes: the early years, representing home, parents, and family; their college and university experiences; marriage and family relationships; career paths; role models and mentors; the development of a sense of self and values; their definitions of leadership; barriers they encountered; and their strategies for success.

Major findings were that a combination of family support, educational nurturing, the development of self-confidence and self-esteem, and the resilience to succeed despite impediments they encountered as adults were important influences in their career success. Especially important were mentoring and role modeling relationships because they helped the former presidents develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Barriers, such as gender stereotyping and the selection of sameness, were also found to inhibit women's access to senior leadership positions.

BIOGRAPHY

Angela René Ballentine, the daughter of Charles P. Ballentine and Audrey T. Ballentine, was born in Eden, North Carolina, on July 31, 1964. After completing high school in Rockingham County, North Carolina, she attended Greensboro College in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she graduated with a bachelor of science degree in biology. She then attended The Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital Radiologic Technology Program, Greensboro, North Carolina, where she became certified in Radiologic Technology.

Ms. Ballentine began her career as a radiographer, specializing in mammography. She worked as a mammography specialist in Houston, Texas, before starting her career in education as an instructor of radiography at Vance-Granville Community College in Henderson, North Carolina. Ms. Ballentine was promoted to assistant program director of the radiography program. She later received her master's of education degree in adult and community college education from North Carolina Sate University in Raleigh, North Carolina. While pursuing the master of education degree, she became the program director of radiography at Vance-Granville Community College.

She currently serves as the program director of the radiography program and the phlebotomy program while also serving as the chairperson of health education. As chairperson of health education, Ms. Ballentine manages several health education programs, including associate degree nursing, licensed practical nursing, medical assisting, radiography, phlebotomy, and human services technology with concentrations in substance abuse and mental health.

Ms. Ballentine is a graduate of the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program. She represented Vance-Granville Community College at the "Great Leaders Retreat " sponsored by the Department of Community Colleges.

She is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at North Carolina State University where she is completing an Ed.D. in higher education administration. Ms. Ballentine is single and currently resides in Raleigh, North Carolina.

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No research is ever conducted alone, and this study is no exception. I want to thank God for blessing me with the strength, endurance, and fortitude to complete this dissertation. Many people contributed to this effort, including family, friends, coworkers, teachers, and mentors, and all of them have my deepest appreciation.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the members of my dissertation committee. To Dr. James Burrow, my doctoral advisor and committee co-chair, I can never find the words to thank you enough. Your support, guidance, and encouragement are directly responsible for my completing this project and I will be forever grateful. I thank you for being there, and I thank you for caring. To Dr. Peter Hessling, my doctoral committee co-chair, thank you so much for your time and energy. You introduced me to naturalistic inquiry, shared with me your expertise in qualitative research, and challenged me to view the world through larger lenses. I also wish to thank Dr. Conrad Glass and Dr. George Vaughan whose wisdom, support, and encouragement helped me gain new insights and new perspectives.

The learning process of a dissertation far exceeds the academic requirements. One must learn patience with self and others, order priorities, and push everyone (your friends and yourself) to their limits. To all my friends and family, I thank you for your unending support and motivation to complete this project. I owe a special thanks to Karen McMahan. The special assistance and guidance you have given me are invaluable. To Dr. Terri Brown, who prodded me unmercifully and continually said "you can do this," thank

you. The two of you were the backbone who helped me get this "masterpiece" written. I owe special gratitude to my colleagues at Vance-Granville Community College for their encouragement and support. To Dr. Edgar Farmer who supported and encouraged my application to the doctoral program and spoke the encouraging words that made me believe I could do it, I am deeply appreciative.

I would be remiss in not acknowledging the female former community college presidents who have given their time to contribute to research in the field of higher education administration. By sharing your stories, insights, and your time, you made this project possible. The community colleges are lucky to have had all of you as leaders. I am forever grateful for your interest in my work and for the open and generous ways in which you contributed to it.

A loving thanks and appreciation to my mother and father, Audrey and Charles Ballentine, who through every adventure and aspiration of my life have stood beside me. Without your love and support, I would not have made it through this process. My achievement is yours as well, and I will love you forever for being there.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES x

LIST OF FIGURES xi

INTRODUCTION 1
- Background 4
- Statement of the Problem 4
- Purpose of the Study 7
- Definition of Terms 8
- Assumptions and Limitations of the Study 9

LITERATURE REVIEW 11
- The Community College 11
  - The Community College Mission 12
- The Community College President 17
- The Female Community College President 18
  - Status of Female Community College Presidents 23
  - Women Accessing the Presidency 26
    - Legal Actions Affecting Access to the Presidency 28
    - Barriers Affecting Access to the Presidency 29
    - Social Forces Affecting Access to the Presidency 30
- Women and Career Advancement 32
  - Academic Background 33
  - Career Planning 38
  - Career Paths 40
  - Professional and Career Development 45
  - Women and Career Influences 48
    - Mentoring Defined 49
  - Summary 55
- Career Development Theory 55
  - Content Theories 58
  - Process Theories 65
  - Content and Process Theories 71
  - Summary 76
- Women in Leadership Roles 77
  - Gender Issues and Leadership 82
  - Communication and Gender Issues 85
- Leadership Theory 86
  - Feminist Theory of Leadership 87

    Trait Theory of Leadership 89
    Presidential Leadership Theory 92
    Connective Leadership 95
    Summary 97

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 98
  Life History Interviewing 100
  Participants 101
  Research Design 101
  Pilot Study 102
  Data Collection and Analysis 102
  Researcher's Role 106
  Ethical Considerations 107
  Validity and Reliability 108
  Summary 114

RESULTS 115
  Introduction 115
  Portrayals 117
    Former President One 117
      Early Years 118
      College and University 119
      Marriage and Family 121
      Career Path 122
      Mentors 126
      Strategies for Success 127
      Sense of Self 128
      Barriers 129
      Closing Impressions 132
    Former President Two 133
      Early Years 133
      College and University 135
      Marriage and Family 136
      Career Path 136
      Mentors 138
      Strategies for Success 140
      Sense of Self 142
      Barriers 144
      Closing Impressions 145
    Former President Three 146
      Early Years 147
      College and University 148
      Career Path 149
      Mentors 151

        Strategies for Success 152
        Sense of Self 154
        Barriers 154
        Closing Impressions 155
    Summary 156

DISCUSSION 157
    Early Years 157
    College and University 159
    Marriage and Family 161
    Career Path 162
    Barriers/Challenges 163
    Role Models and Mentors 165
    Sense of Self 167
    Leadership 169
    Strategies for Success 171
    Summary 172
    Emergent Themes 173
        Characteristics of the Respondents 173
        Commitment to the Community Colleges 175
        Barriers 176
        Positioning Oneself 178
        Finding the Right Fit 179
        Education 179
        Influences in the Decision-making Process 180
    Summary 182

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 183
    Conclusions and Implications for Practice 184
        Summary 190
    Recommendations for Further Research 191

REFERENCES 194

APPENDICES 234

    Appendix A: Letter and Consent Form 235
    Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guide 238

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Traits and Skills of Successful Leaders 91

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Data Collection and Analysis 104

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Hexagonal model for defining the relations among Holland's personality types and environments and their interactions 62

2. Career development framework 75

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies.
You may trod me in the very dirt
but still, like dust, I'll rise.
—*Maya Angelou*

Throughout the 20th century, changes in women's roles in both education and society have been dramatic. Women's leadership representation and their roles in senior administration have also experienced unprecedented changes. These changes will create more opportunities for new leaders to be selected. Shakeshaft (1987) predicted that soon there will be more women than men in leadership positions in the American educational system. Vaughan (1990) predicted that "Indeed, if the present situation is any indication of the future, in the years ahead, more and more community college presidents will be women" (p. 234). These two scholars' predictions are correct, because more women than ever before hold presidencies of colleges and universities.

The 1990s have witnessed the largest increase in the numbers of female presidents of higher education institutions than in any decade in history. According to Buddemeier (1998), between 1992 and 1995, the percentage of women presidents of all higher education institutions grew from 12% to 16%. From 1984 to 1992, the percentage of women presidents grew only 2% (American Council on Education, Office of Women in Higher Education [ACE, OWHE], 1995). Similarly, the percentage of female community college presidents increased 7% over a 5-year period in the 1990s, from 10.8% in 1991 to 17.8% in 1996 (Vaughan, Mellander, & Bois, 1994; Vaughan & Weisman, 1997). These statistics reflect growth in the number of women in the community college presidency nationwide.

In the 1980s, the average percentage of female presidents of public community colleges was 10%, and the focal point of many studies was examining why women were attaining community college presidencies at lower rates than men were. Now, nearly 10 years later, more women than ever before are becoming community college presidents. A close examination of the career histories of those women who have served as community college presidents may assist women aspiring to the presidency to be better prepared to fulfill this important role. To determine where we are going, we have to know where we have been.

The literature suggests that female community college presidents do not have a long history. The need to use the past to inform the present is well established in the literature. As we embark on the 21st century, understanding the career development experiences and the self-perceived experiences of the women who have sought and gained entry to the presidency is important if women are to continue increasing their representation in senior leadership of higher education institutions.

In this study, I examined the career histories of three female former community college presidents in a southeastern community college system. I employed the sociological multiple life history method of qualitative research to capture the essence of the participants' career development experiences, with respect to their ascendancy to the presidency, and to identify the factors and circumstances that influenced their decision to seek the community college presidency. "The point of using qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states" (Patton, 1990, pp. 39-41). From the lives and experiences of these former community college presidents, stories will emerge detailing these women's unique career development experiences as community college presidents.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), "sociological life histories construct subjects' lives by emphasizing the role of organizations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping subjects' evolving definitions of self and their perspectives on life" (p. 65). When using the sociological multiple life history method, "human experiences are examined through case study interviewing using the person as a vehicle to understand basic aspects of human behavior or existing institutions rather than history" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 65). According to Hughes, "career refers to the various positions, stages, and ways of thinking people pass through in the course of their lives" (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 65). This sociological multiple life history study provides a reflective look at the career development experiences of these female former presidents and augments the literature on women in senior administration in general and primarily women in the community college presidency. Specifically, I examine background information related to female administrative representation in a southeastern community college system.

Background

In 1996, women were represented in a southeastern state's 58 community colleges by the following percentages: presidents, 3.4%; senior administrators, 28%; executives, administrators, and managers, 44% (North Carolina Community College System [NCCCS], 1995-1996). By 1999, the percentages of women in this system had risen to the following: presidents, 12.0%; senior administrators, 32.6%; executives, administrators, and managers, 49.3% (North Carolina Community College System, 1998-1999). These statistics reflect growth in the number of female administrators in the community college system being examined.

Statement of the Problem

Many studies have examined the career paths of women in top administrative positions in community colleges (e.g., Capozzoli, 1989; Faulconer, 1995; Hemming, 1982; Moore, 1983; Twombley, 1985). Other researchers have compared the career paths of male community college presidents to that of female community college presidents (Oglesby, 1993; Paul, Sweet, & Brigham, 1980; Winship, 1992; Winship & Amey, 1992). Researchers have studied women in higher education administration and their mentor relationships (Moore, 1982; Moore & Salimbene, 1981; Thomas, 1986). There have also been detailed studies of female community college presidents (Despain, 1991; Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993; Vaughan, 1989a). In addition to formal studies, many articles have been written about the challenges and barriers female presidents face in their career paths (Featherman, 1994; Leatherman, 1991, 1993; McMillen, 1986). Further review of these and other studies are found in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Although many of the aforementioned studies concerned women in top administrative positions in the community college, and several focused on female community college presidents, no recent qualitative study has presented a portrait of the career development experiences of female community college presidents. No sociological life history approach has been used to acquire information about the factors and circumstances that influenced their decision to seek the community college presidency by examining their self-perceptions of their career development experiences

The existing data on women in chief executive positions in higher education administration have not provided insight or information into the women themselves who have attained community college presidencies. If the field of higher education is to present a complete and accurate accounting of its history, there should be adequate documentation of the experiences of women in this position. Edson (1988) summed up the need for documenting the experiences of women in higher education administration:

> The qualitative details of the lives of women suggest an alternative way of viewing issues in educational administration. Their stories give texture and color to the quantitative data most often relied on in other studies, as well as offer a way of identifying with individuals throughout the country who seek administrative jobs and who wrestle with the demands of the work one employs. (p. 3)

As more women aspire to higher education administrative positions, more personal and historical information is needed about women who have held the chief executive position of the community college presidency. Moreover, as greater numbers of women pursue senior administrative careers in higher education, they can benefit from more knowledge of how an aspiring professional develops a career as an administrator in general and as a senior-ranking official such as the president in particular.

Through the stories these three female former community college presidents shared, a better understanding of the significant challenges and barriers these women faced and overcame was revealed. When I reflect on the women who have served before, those who are currently serving, and those who aspire to serve as community college presidents, I think of Maya Angelou's poem "And Still I Rise" (see quotes at the beginning of the chapters).

Societal stereotypes have been a barrier to women's career advancement, in general, and to women in higher education administration, specifically. Coursen and Mazzarella (1981) concluded:

> Instead of looking at women administrators as individuals, the system draws the same conclusions about all women: that their home responsibilities keep them from doing well in administration, that they don't want demanding jobs, that they are too emotional and that they have to stop work to have babies. (p. 42)

Most myths, assumptions, and stereotypical statements about women have been presented and received as facts. According to Chideya (1995), "as much as facts can be manipulated, facts are also a powerful way to destroy stereotypes. . . . Facts empower us (p. 5). In 1988, Green (as cited in Peterson, 1992) defined the stance that all educators must take to set the record straight:

> We who are in education cannot know, cannot truly know how it was, how it is. But we can attend to some of the voices, some of the stories. And as we do so, our perspectives on the meaning of freedom and the possibility of freedom in this country may particularize and expand. (p. 10)

This study was designed to attend to some of the voices by portraying, through detailed, thick descriptions, the career development experiences of three women who sought and gained entry into the community college presidency. These three women were the first women to have served as community college presidents in this southeastern state.

These former community college presidents' voices are important to the literature of women in higher education administration. They represent a missing voice. "The missing piece of the puzzle is that no one talked to these women [college presidents] about their lives, their work experiences or their career aspirations. People assumed women lack such aspirations, and nothing could be more misleading" (Edson, 1988, p. 1).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to tell the stories of all three female former community college presidents in a southeastern community college system to present a written portrait of their career development experiences, with respect to their ascendency to the presidency. The study focused on identifying the factors and circumstances that influenced these women's decisions to seek the community college presidency by examining their self-perceptions of their career development experiences.

This study contributes to the existing literature on women in higher education administration in general and women in community college senior administration in particular. Specifically, this study's findings contribute to a better understanding of how traditional gender-based social roles influence career choice and aspirations. As well, this study contributes to the literature on women's experience in leadership roles.

This research should be of particular interest to women professionals embarking upon a career in higher education because the sociological multiple life histories of these three female former community college presidents reveal the collective and individual factors of success in the lives of such women. This knowledge may give female academics an increased understanding of the ways they use and construct knowledge and education to their own benefit and, perhaps, to their detriment.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined within the context of how they are used in this study:

1. *President*–"the chief officer of an organization . . . usually entrusted with the direction and administration of its policies" (Webster, 1983, p. 931). The term *president* will be used as an all-encompassing term to denote the chief executive officer of an institution or of a community college system (Buddemeier, 1998).

2. *Mentoring*–the interaction between a junior colleague (protégé) and a senior colleague (mentor who promotes the career and psychosocial development of the protégé) (Kram, 1986).

3. *Mentor*–an individual who guides, sponsors, advises, protects, and takes special interest in the protégé's development (Sands, Parson, & Duane, 1991).

4. *Higher education administration career*–refers to "a series of jobs involving tasks of governance and management that over time tend to have increasing responsibility, reward, and recognition" (Moore, 1994, p. 9).

5. *Community college*–this term will be used instead of junior or two-year college. As well, community college will be used throughout the study to refer only to public community colleges (Buddemeier, 1998).

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The techniques for collecting and analyzing data in a qualitative study are too labor intensive to examine every phenomenon of interest. The number of respondents must be limited and the research focused. The inquirer cannot study everything about the research setting nor is everything worthy of study (Powdermaker, 1966). Therefore, this study was limited to examining the career development of the three female former community college presidents in a southeastern community college system.

Another limitation of naturalistic inquiry is the study cannot be comparative nor can the results be used to predict or control. The research cannot serve as a comparative study of career development among female community college presidents in other regions or states of the United States or of other countries or provinces. Although the results of this study shed light on the career development of these women, the results cannot be used to predict career development of all women or all female community college presidents. Results may be transferred from one similar context to another, but the burden of truth lies with the transferer (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Finally, I am employed in the community college system; therefore, my beliefs and professional experiences, coupled with theories I garnered from the literature, created an informed position from which to conduct the research. Every effort was made to put aside personal biases or presuppositions.

A review of the literature on women's career choices revealed that the vocational interests of women are strongly influenced by traditional gender-role stereotypes. Therefore, the study of women's experiences as they sought and gained entry to the community college presidency necessitates the examination of career development and the influence of gender in career choices.

To obtain a firsthand accounting of the career development experiences of three women in the community college presidency, the research was guided by the following broad research question: What were the career development experiences and self-perceived influences on these women as they sought and gained entry into the community college presidency?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of the review was to promote a deeper understanding of women's professional achievement and the process of career development and to demonstrate the need for this study. After reviewing the literature, I decided to concentrate on three primary areas: (a) the structure of the community college system, with particular attention on women's leadership style and career paths taken to attain top academic administrative positions, (b) career development, with specific focus on women community college presidents and their access to the presidency, and finally (c) how role models and mentors influence women's occupational choice, administrative behavior, and career mobility.

The Community College

Community colleges are complex organizations within the schema of public education. According to Mitchell (1966), the community college is

> an educational institution dedicated primarily to the particular needs of a community or an area offering the freshmen and sophomore courses of a college of arts and sciences and/or the first or second year courses of a two-year technical institute of college grade . . . [as well as] a variety of occupational, vocational and avocational and recreational training courses.

These community college functions are carried out under the jurisdiction of a local board of trustees and the general administration of the Board of Higher Education.

In the years following World War II, a rapid shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy took place. With that change came the awareness that a different kind of education was needed. Although two-year colleges were already in existence, changes had to be made so that these institutions would meet the needs of the communities they served in better ways than ever before. In the 1950s, legislators in the southeastern state under study restructured the public two-year colleges, naming them community colleges, and changing the manner in which they were governed. Other changes in governance were made during the 1960s and 1970s.

The community college system in the southeastern state in this study celebrated its 25th anniversary in the late 1980s, recognizing that in its service, the system had emerged as one of the nation's largest community college networks. During its more than 35-year history, the system has educated millions of students and employed thousands of faculty and staff. Only time will tell what the future holds for this type of educational delivery system. However, if the past is an indicator, the future will be filled with much work to do in serving this state and its people.

The Community College Mission

Community college leaders pride themselves on reflecting the needs and values of the communities in which they are located, on being adaptable to the changing needs of that community (Levin, 1995), and on having the potential to reach and influence people whom other higher education institutions do not (Vaughan & Associates, 1992). These areas of pride are reflected in the colleges' mission statements. The use of the word *community* connotes a mission that provides success for all applicants, regardless of their age and ethnic background, and that devotes college resources toward partially meeting community needs (Bowyer, 1992). Community college missions endeavor to serve the public good through both their commitment to developing people to their fullest potential (Tatum, 1992) and their involvement in local economic development. These goals are addressed by providing an avenue for equal opportunity for a quality education at a reasonable cost (Neff, 1992; Roueche, Taber, & Roueche, 1995) and by adding occupational skills to society (Tatum, 1992). Vaughan (1992) described this approach to higher education as a shift from student as citizen to citizen as student.

With access, community service, and economic development identified as priorities, the community college is a unique entity in the broader educational system (Levin, 1996). This uniqueness translates into open-access policies for students, comprehensive curricula, and commitment to local service goals (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Roueche & Baker, 1987). The open-access policy results in student populations who differ from the traditional four-year college student populations. Community college students usually commute rather than reside at the school. Very often, they come to the school without strong academic preparation, many having never completed high school (Eaton, 1994). The majority of community college students are older than are traditional-aged college students, with the average age of community college students being in the mid-twenties. For community college students to be reentering academe to upgrade skills, to complete programs that had been started earlier in their lives, and to learn new sets of competencies are customary (Eaton, 1994). The students have more diverse backgrounds in culture, life experiences, and interests than do students in the university system and on average are from lower income families. A large percentage attend part time, many dropping in and out several times (Deegan, Tillery, & Associates, 1985).

The comprehensive curriculum, characteristic of the community college, has been described as a "smorgasbord" approach to higher education (McGrath & Spear, 1991). This smorgasbord approach reflects community colleges' aims of meeting the community's needs and their ability to respond quickly to adapt to these needs. Curriculum offerings in most colleges include credit programs, such as high school upgrading courses, vocational programs, liberal arts, and university transfer courses. There are also customized job training programs, contract learning programs with industry to provide specific skills upgrading, and general enrichment and avocational courses. Credentials offered range from one-day certificates and university transfer courses to two-year associate degrees (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Community colleges, however, are not without critics—those who feel the mission has stretched too far. Eaton (1994) argued that the collegiate purpose has been overshadowed by terminal occupational education, developmental and remedial education, and community service. Doucette and Roueche (1991) suggested community colleges are still striving for respect in a society that often gives only lip service to democratic ideals of access and egalitarianism, ideals that are part of these institutions' mission. Richardson, Fisk, and Okum (1983) concluded that the open-access policy has resulted in declining standards, demoralized faculties, and poorly served students as colleges level down the "norms of literacy." McGrath and Spear (1991) submitted community colleges are doing little to optimize individual potential by offering remediation rather than vigorous academic programs. Weis (1985) maintained that the community college approach to democratization of education is merely rhetoric: in reality these institutions serve to reinforce the class structure of American society. Brint and Karabel (1989) contended that community colleges reproduce social and economic inequality by offering terminal occupational education that focuses on participation rather than on achievement. Clark (1980) suggested community colleges serve a "cooling out" function, the process of lowering and rechanneling students' educational aspirations, serving to reinforce the stratification and inequity in society.

These critics' concerns focus on student outcomes. Another area of concern relates to community colleges' involvement in economic development (Bowyer, 1992). The same mission statements that espouse goals of promoting community college partnerships and economic development help to position these institutions for potential conflicts of interest between serving the students and serving the community. Community colleges are often involved in political and capitalistic environments through partnerships with business and industry, placing colleges on the edge of traditional views regarding education and service (Bowyer, 1992). As revenues decline and colleges seek new support systems, they are expected to

> rethink their own boundaries in light of the reality that other entities important to the colleges' well-being are rethinking theirs. It will require colleges to seriously consider the nature of and appropriate limits on the company they will keep in their new ventures. (Roueche, Taber, & Roueche, 1995, p. 368)

Thelin (1994) offered the idea of a shift in higher education from a commonwealth or community ethos toward a consumerism ethos. He was referring to universities, but the same shift may be evident in community colleges as they seek to develop partnerships with industry. Clowes and Levin (1994) believed there is strong evidence to suggest "mission drift" or a shift in community college mission that will have "potentially significant consequences for all of higher education" (p. 459). If the critics are correct, community college leadership approaches will need to be altered to ensure institutions are addressing issues and employing strategies that will advance them into the next generation of community colleges (Desjardins, 1996; Twombley, 1994) Currently, in community colleges, the majority student population is female (Eaton, 1994; Twombley, 1994), and almost half of the full-time faculty are women (Knopp, 1995; Townsend, 1992). Dziech (in Twombley, 1994) observed that, while on the surface community colleges have been good to women, they have not always been good enough to treat them equitably. Twombley (1994) concluded from her study of 174 articles discussing "women/gender in community/two-year colleges" (p. 441) that the community college attitude toward women continues to be ambivalent. Hughes, Frances, and Lombardo (1991) predicted demographic and workforce trends will necessitate that higher education leaders respond to certain issues. Among these issues are increased educational needs of women and minorities and increased participation by individuals over 35 years of age. These trends will have an impact on community colleges, because these are the people most likely to attend community colleges. Higher education leaders, including community college presidents, must look carefully at these trends if they hope to address these issues and manage their institutions adequately and creatively at the turn of the 21st century (Cohen & Brawer, 1994). Therefore, learning more about the career histories of the female former community college presidents in this study and the factors and circumstances that influenced their decision to seek the community college presidency should help community college leaders in recruiting and retaining female presidents. As well, this knowledge should help community college leaders in developing internships and other career development opportunities to train more women for senior positions in higher education administration.

The Community College President

"Attempting to understand the community college without understanding its most important leaders, is, at the risk of being accused of engaging in a bit of hyperbole, tantamount to trying to understand the American Revolution without studying Jefferson and Washington" (Vaughan, 1986, p. 9). In an effort to understand better the characteristics of two-year college presidents, Young, Rue, Massersmith, and Grammell (1981) surveyed chief executive officers at 1,218 colleges nationwide. This earlier profile of community college presidents reveals that 72.6% had been employed in higher education for 11 or more years. Drawing from interviews and survey data, Vaughan's (1986) findings revealed that the majority of community college presidents were white males who came from "blue collar" family backgrounds. As well, he noted that 45% of the presidents presided over colleges in their home states, alluding to the possibility that these presidents had "remained provincial in terms of their environment" (p. 15).

Vaughan's study also noted that 75% of the respondents had doctoral degrees, confirming the previous findings of Young and colleagues (1981).

Practitioners in the 1970s identified roles and responsibilities of community college presidents as managers, politicians, mentors, manipulators, and fiscal implementors. Greenfield (1978) described the "politics of joy" (p. 36) in being a college president. McClenney (1978) asserted the need for community college presidents to be managers. Sims (1978) forecasted the end of the "glory years" (pp. 20-24) of abundant funding and political clout for the community college and predicted the need for presidents to be shrewd money managers. Another practitioner propounded future community college presidents would have to be excellent communicators and marketing agents who could handle the diverse demands of special interest groups and emerging community social and economic issues (Bickford, 1978). Vaughan (1978) espoused the need for presidents to act as mentors for "setting the tone and pace . . . in maintaining the delicate balance between student needs and faculty/administrator needs and, at the same time, assuring that the college serves the needs of society in general" (p. 10). Vaughan portrayed the community college president as the college's role model for students, faculty, community citizens, and others with whom the chief executive officer comes into contact.

The Female Community College President

Female community college presidents do not have a long history. In fact, relative to other institutions of higher education, the public community college itself is new. According to Buddemeier (1998), Joilet Junior College, the first public community college, opened its doors after the turn of the century in 1901. "The late 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s were the 'boom years' for community colleges; some years saw community colleges opening at a rate of one per week" (Buddemeier, 1998, p. 13). Primarily, male presidents founded these colleges. In 1971, the majority of female college presidents were either nuns or presidents of private women's colleges (Chamberlain, 1988). Even though there were increases in the number of women in educational administration in the 1980s, the American Council on Education (1988) reported only 10% of college presidents were women. According to the American Council on Education (1995), in 1975, 5% (148 individuals) of all presidents in all institutions of higher education were women; of these women, 7% (11 individuals) were in community colleges.

Bernice Sandler, Director of the Project on the Status and Education of Women at the Association of American Colleges, was quoted in the December 10, 1973, issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as stating the following:

> Were it not for the magnificent Catholic sisters who run their own institutions, the number of women college presidents would be less than the number of whooping cranes. Women who are college presidents should be declared an endangered species. (as cited in Buddemeier, 1998)

In 1973, Alice J. Thurston, former Garland Junior College president, did an informal examination of the 1973 Junior College Directory and found five female presidents in community colleges; all other female presidents headed private two-year institutions (Thurston, 1975). The history of female community college presidents spans just over 20 years. Buddemeier (1998) asserted:

> These past 25 years, however, have seen a growth in the number of women in the community college presidency and changes in both the career paths leading to the community college presidency for women and the experiences of these women while in the presidency. (p. 14)

According to the American Council on Education (1995), community colleges took the lead in hiring women presidents when compared to other segments of higher education. The American Council on Education further stated that, of all women presidents in 1984, 25% (72 individuals) were in public community colleges (American Council on Education [ACE], 1995). "Since 1984, only private four-year institutions have had a greater percentage of female presidents than community colleges" (Touchton & Ingram, 1995, p. 4). The literature of the early 1980s indicates this fact was not a comfort to women in community college leadership. "In reality, the story of women in 'the people's college,' is an account of success and failure, of hope and despair" (Dziech, 1983, p. 55). According to Dziech, the community college relied on two ways to defend its inequities toward women at all levels within the college. Dziech's first assertion is that the community college propagates the idea of "you've come a long way, baby," in comparing current statistics to past decades. The second claim is that administrators compare the community college representation of women to public four-year institution's representation of women in administration where the inequities were even greater (Dziech, 1983).

Simultaneously, women's attitudes toward these barriers were changing. Hemming's (1982) study of female community college presidents in California cited evidence that female presidents during the 1970s often found that they were treated differently from male presidents but did not recognize the treatment as discrimination. The average female community college president in the early 1980s was "twice as likely to believe she had suffered discrimination on the basis of her sex" than were previous female community college presidents (Hemming, 1982, p. 4). Moreover, women and men were found to view discrimination differently. In 1983, Sandler explained, "Men see discrimination as overt, while women see it as silent, hidden, insidious" (as cited in Eaton, 1984, p. 95). Women of all educational levels and in all institutions were subject to these invisible hurdles. Shakeshaft (1987) reported that both overt and covert barriers of sex discrimination have severely hindered women's progress in attaining top positions in educational administration.

Touchton, Shavlik, and Davis (1993) surveyed a sample of female presidents from all institutions of higher education in 1985. Buddemeier (1998) asserted that "these research data contain a comprehensive selection of data concerning female presidents at public community colleges in the 1980s from which a general profile can be obtained" (p. 15). According to Touchton and colleagues (1993), of the female community college presidents who were surveyed, 80% were white, 78% were between ages 40-60 (average age not available), 54% were married, and 63% had children. At that time, 79% of female community college presidents held the doctorate.

According to Touchton and associates (1993), many female presidents in public community colleges during the early 1980s were attracted to the presidency because it became a goal as they moved up the administrative ladder (73%). They became candidates for their position most often by applying for the position without being nominated (46%) or by being nominated and accepting the nomination (27%). In addition, 41% were internal candidates for their position (Touchton et al., 1993).

The change in women's academic preparation in regard to their ascent into higher education is important to note. According to Long and Blanchard (1991), in 1969-70, men received 57% of the associate degrees awarded. By 1986-87, the figures had reversed, and women were awarded the majority (56%) of the associate degrees (Long & Blanchard, 1991). As cited in Buddemeier (1998), the U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (USDE, NCES) revealed that in 1992-93, women received 59% of all associate degrees awarded by institutions of higher education. The NCES further revealed that women surpassed the number of men receiving bachelor's degrees in 1981-82. In the academic year 1992-93, 54% of bachelor's degrees, 54% of master's degrees, and 38% of doctorates were awarded to women (USDE, NCES, as cited in Buddemeier, 1998). In the community college, specifically, women receive more degrees and are enrolled in larger numbers than are men (Long & Blanchard, 1991).

Just as there are more female students than male students in the community college system, there are also more full-time female faculty members (45%) in the community colleges than anywhere else in higher education (Townsend, 1995).

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Moreover, a higher percentage of female presidents is in the community college system than is in public four-year institutions. Therefore, "women teaching in a two-year school are more likely to have a female president than are women in four-year colleges and universities" (Townsend, p. 43). These findings seem to hold true except in the community college system that was examined in this dissertation. Interestingly, in this community college system, a woman was not appointed president of a community college until 22 years after the system began (52 years if one counts the very first public two-year college in the state). The number of women in faculty and administrative positions within a college affects female students while they are at the institution and also how they progress in their careers.

Status of Female Community College Presidents

More women than ever before are holding presidencies. More specifically, Vaughan, Mellander, and Blois (1994) suggested that the past 5 years have seen a faster rate of growth for women attaining community college presidencies than in any other period in history. According to Vaughan and colleagues (1994), in 1991, 10.8% of community college presidents were women. Buddemeier (1998) suggested that "the most recent study of community college presidents, from which specific information concerning female community college presidents can be gathered, is Vaughan and Weisman's (1997) nation-wide survey of all public community college presidents" (p. 10). These researchers found that 17.8% of all community college presidents were women—an increase of 7% over the past 5 years (as cited in Buddemeier, 1998).

The early 1980s and early 1990s showed slow growth in the number of female community college presidents. In 1984, women held 72 community college presidencies (8%) and in 1992 women held 106 presidencies (10%) (ACE, 1995). As a result, in the 8 years spanning 1984 to 1992, the percentage of women holding community college presidencies increased 2%. Between 1992 and 1995, the percentage of women presidents at all institutions of higher education grew from 12% to 16% (ACE, 1995). In 1995, women held 453 presidencies (16%) at all colleges and universities and 138 presidencies (15%) within the community college system (ACE, 1995).

The following statistical data were garnered from the study completed by Vaughan and Weisman in 1997. The average age of female community college presidents is 51; the average age at which women assume their first presidency is 46. Approximately 23% of all female community college presidents are minorities: 12% are African American, 7% are Hispanic, 3% are Asian American, and one female president is Native American (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997).

Sixty percent of female community college presidents are married. In addition, over 25% of female presidents are divorced and not remarried and 9% are single and have never married (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997).

Contrary to 20 years ago when no women held presidencies in California, Illinois, and Texas, 39% of current female community college presidents are located in these systems, the three largest community college systems in the nation. Vaughan and Weisman (1997) found that one-fourth of all female community college presidents are in California, 8% are in Illinois, and 6% are in Texas.

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According to Vaughan and Weisman (1997), the majority of current female community college presidents do not have long tenures in the presidency. Over 20% of female presidents have been president for 1 year or less, and 66% have been president for 5 years or less. Eighty percent of female presidents have held one community college presidency (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997).

In terms of education, Vaughan and Weisman (1997) reported that 38% of all female presidents have attended a community college at some time and 15% earned an associate's degree. Eighty-six percent of female community college presidents have earned the doctorate, and 12% have earned the master's as their highest degree. Most female community college presidents hold their highest degree in the field of higher education. Regarding teaching experience, 51% of female community college presidents have taught full time at a community college, and another 30% of female presidents have taught part time.

Female community college presidents' are likely to come from two-career families and their backgrounds are likely to include parents who have experience in higher education. Over 20% of both fathers and mothers of female community college presidents have earned a college degree (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997). These data are supportive of past research that indicated the mother's role might have a growing influence on her daughter's career choice (Vaughan, 1994). Other research supports this assumption. Mothers of female community college presidents were found to have served as early role models for career pursuit and achievement (Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993; Vaughan, 1994).

Similarly, Curry (1995) found that most influential persons in the careers of female community college presidents were the father, mother, and advisor or educator. The respondents in Curry's study identified the father as being the most influential in the female president's professional development. Parental support was recognized as influential in nearly all female community college presidents' lives, and the motivation to excel also grew out of paternal influence, usually from her father or father figure.

Women Accessing the Presidency

Women in education tend to access administrative positions through specialist positions, supervisory positions, and elementary school principalships (Ortiz, 1982; Stockard, 1984), whereas men are more likely to access directly from administrative training programs (Shakeshaft, 1987). Greenfield and Beam (1980) found that women also used the position of counselor to move into administration.

Women have been found to enter administration at a later age in life than men do (Gillett-Karam, 1988). Paddock (1981) found from her study that 49.1% of women administrators had taken maternity leave sometime during their careers, which might account for women's age variance to men in entering administration. In contrast to women, men seldom take leave, according to Paddock.

Referencing early access to the presidency, Vaughan (1989a) noted that "almost one-fourth of the presidents in 1960 came from public school administration and over 15 percent came from four-year institutions; by 1989, "almost 90 percent . . . came to the presidency from within the community college ranks" (pp. 1-2). Twombley (1988), researching the existence of internal labor markets in community colleges, reported that "routes to the presidency were quite clear" (p. 682). Presidents tended to access the presidency directly from the chief academic officer position. Twombley's study revealed the importance of the chief academic officer position as a step to the presidency, and this finding was substantiated in a later study by Vaughan (1990). Drawing from a national survey of the careers and lifestyles of deans of instruction in community colleges, Vaughan revealed the significance of holding an academic deanship for access to the community college presidency. He further implied that, because of the large number of women in deanships, the underrepresentation of women in CEO positions will be addressed by this seemingly direct "pathway" to the presidency. Opponents studying socialization into top administrative positions might imply otherwise, noting that individuals tend to select those with whom they can most easily relate (Restine, 1993). Because the majority of community college presidents and members of the board of trustees are white males, the perpetual dilemma of access continues to augment the realms of diversity and women/minority representation in community college presidencies (Desjardins, 1991; Gillett-Karam, Roueche, & Roueche, 1991).

Studies of community college women presidents reveal that formal and informal factors contribute to or hinder women's career advancement into the CEO position. More can be learned about how women reach the presidency by examining the impact that legal actions, barriers to access, and social forces have had on their ascendancy to the presidency.

Legal Actions Affecting Access to the Presidency

Women's progress in attaining administrative positions has become the focus of a growing body of literature and research. Pearson, Shavlik and Touchton (1989) asserted that "legal mandates have been a powerful force" in promoting "institutions to establish new policies and procedures, to open access to women" administrators, and to create a culture that may eventually "remedy inequalities" that now prevent "full and equitable participation of women" (p. 4). The authors cited several "laws, regulations, and executive orders" that have promoted women's presence and influence in higher education. Affirmative action heightened the expectations of women and minorities, and many believed that a new climate of opportunity would enhance women's career aspirations. Perhaps these expectations explain, in part, why so many female aspirants believe that affirmative action is helping some women. When asked if affirmative action played an important role in attaining the presidency, 54% of the women respondents in Vaughan's (1989a) study responded positively.

On the other hand, Adkinson argued (as cited in Edson, 1988), "Federal, action policies may have had a greater impact on women's aspirations than on institutions" (p. 169). Henning and Jardim (as cited in Edson, 1988) cautioned that "laws alone will not ensure that women who aspire to careers in management—and who have the potential to be effective managers—will necessarily succeed," and that "clearly much more needs to be done" (p. 170).

Legal actions, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Affirmative Action, Title IX, and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, have all impacted the movement of women into the workforce. As well, these actions have created an awareness of women's place in business and educational organizations.

Barriers Affecting Access to the Presidency

In educational administration, women are often found in positions created to provide advising, counseling, and programming to women and other minority group members or in affirmative action and equal opportunity positions (Pearson et al., 1989). These positions are not considered conducive to establishing a viable route to top administrative leadership. This finding seems to hold true also in community college positions.

Barriers to women's advancement, according to LeBlanc (1993), "are those factors which circumvent or inhibit their entry into jobs, occupations, and organizations" (p. 42). LeBlanc (1993) suggested that there are 11 barriers to advancement in higher education: "(a) self-esteem, (b) need for self-improvement, (c) limited external interactions, (d) motherhood/family/academe, (e) issues of loneliness, (f) limited political/business encounters, (g) academic vs. administration, (h) need for critical career path, (i) need for mentoring, (j) need for internal/external support systems (networking), and (k) ability to see the 'Big Picture' within the organization" (LeBlanc, 1993, pp. 44-49). LeBlanc (1993) asserted that greater attention be devoted to developing women's intrapersonal and interpersonal skills so that women can achieve upward mobility.

Johnsrud and Sagaria (1989) hypothesized that women in administrative positions would be "disadvantaged in the hierarchical outcomes (status, responsibility and salary) they receive as a result of their promotions" (p. 28). Findings of their study suggest women have equivalent educational backgrounds and significantly more experience when compared to males. Gender-based decisions may well result in job segregation within educational institutions. Although women are able to access a certain level of community college administration, there is concern about women's opportunities to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge affording them a greater opportunity for attaining the position of president.

Because of the sparse number of women holding the chief executive officer position, there is a lack of female mentors and role models. Training through mentoring is recognized as a viable preparation route to community college president positions (Merriam & Thomas, 1986; Vaughan, 1989a).

In a qualitative case study of mentoring in the career development of 20 male community college presidents, Merriam and Thomas (1986) found that mentors function in a variety of favorable ways—as models for desired adaptable behavior, as facilitators in gainful experiences, as providers for emotional support, and as guides who provided ways for proteges to become senior administrators. Their study's lack of women subjects presents a note of skepticism when referencing community college women presidents and mentoring.

Social Forces Affecting Access to the Presidency

Women still must contend with their own social orientation toward assuming a leadership role in our society. Gilligan (1982, 1993), Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), and Tannen (1994) asserted that women communicate and behave quite differently from men. With the workforce unaccustomed to the apparent difference in some leadership behaviors of women, this knowledge gap compounds the established stereotype that women are not strong enough to handle leadership positions. Established attitudes and beliefs are strong forces in society, and overcoming these firmly imbedded ideas can be an arduous challenge for women seeking leadership. Stereotypes are deeply imbedded in a culture (Schein, 1985) and create obstacles for individuals seeking roles outside society's classification. Studies of community college presidents report that women must overcome differences in expectations as a result of gender stereotypes when accessing the high-level position (Thomas, 1993) and that women have indicated a need to be "extremely well qualified" and "overprepared for their positions" (Shavlik & Touchton, 1988, p. 101).

In a study of 35 community college women presidents, Vaughan (1989a) noted the experiences these women had in accessing the chief executive officer position. One woman participant revealed that one of the questions posed to her in a presidential screening interview asked if a woman could be "strong enough to 'control' the faculty?" (p. 70). Other respondents in Vaughan's study noted stereotypical reactions to their size implied weakness, or to their female sex implied incompetence. Other women interviewing for presidential positions noted the wariness of board of trustee members regarding their female beliefs and the "demands" of family and children in prohibiting due attention to the job (Vaughan, 1989a).

Socialization continues to impede the advancement of women into the presidency. Kanter (1993) argued that managerial promotion decisions are often based on who is perceived to be trustworthy, a question that is often a matter of who is perceived to be like oneself. Thus, if men continue to dominate the role of community college president and if boards of trustees continue to be predominantly white male, establishing oneself within the trusting boundaries of those who select the presidents of these two-year institutions remains problematic for women aspiring to the top position.

Female administrators are engaged in a struggle not only to become college presidents themselves but also to preserve and expand opportunities for other women. This struggle demands their best efforts, as the vitality and future viability of educational institutions depend on their success.

Women and Career Advancement

Women have made important strides over the past 15 years in obtaining senior administrative positions in higher education, but these gains have not been equally distributed across all types of institutions. Many women have similar educational backgrounds to that of male administrators, yet they are "disproportionately represented in the lower levels of administrative positions" (Warner & DeFleur, 1993, p. 18). The number of challenges women face indicates that equal opportunity does not exist, and that women must actively seek out strategies and take the necessary risks for them to obtain leadership positions (Slimmer, 1984; Warner & DeFleur, 1993).

The literature revealed four key factors in career advancement: (a) academic background, (b) career planning, (c) career paths, and (d) professional development. These four factors are discussed in detail.

Academic Background

One of the most influential factors of whether an individual rises to a top position in higher education is his or her academic background and experience. Regardless of the type of degree, for women, the importance of obtaining a solid educational base cannot be stressed enough (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Any discussion of academic background should include information about where women were first educated. Research findings over the past 20 years show that women who attend women's colleges tend to be more successful in their careers than women who attend co-educational institutions (Buddemeier, 1998). In this dissertation, I asked questions of the three former presidents to elicit detailed information about their educational experiences (e.g., women's college).

A 1973 report by the Carnegie Commission stated that "women's colleges produced a disproportionate share of women leaders in American society" (as cited in Oates & Williamson, 1988, p. 195). "Thus the importance of the number of women faculty, in relation to the total faculty population and to the number of women students, emerges and reemerges as a major influence in the development of women students who subsequently become achievers" (as cited in Tidball, 1988, p. 218). Smith, Wolf, and Morrison (1995) reported that "graduates of women's colleges are more likely to attend graduate school, major in non-traditional fields, express higher levels of self-esteem and leadership skills, and be successful in their adult lives" (p. 246). In 1985, "40% of women presidents at all institutions within higher education were graduates of women's colleges" (Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993, p. 11). "Four percent of female community college presidents who responded to the 1985 survey graduated from women's colleges" (p. 11).

According to Rice and Hemming (1988), "there is a positive relationship between graduating from a woman's college and high career accomplishment" (p. 229). "There seems little question that an environment in which many women teachers and mentors provide traditional and nontraditional examples of achievement is an advantage to young women" (p. 232). Although women's colleges have been found to be influential in the career success of women, there are other more specific factors that help determine their career advancement. For example, the positions within the community college that one holds who is aspiring to a chief executive position has an important influence on whether one attains the top position.

The typical path for advancing from an entry-level position to an executive one is through the academic ranks (Anderson, 1993). However, McDade (1991) argued that one of the most persistent myths in higher education is that only those with a Ph.D. in an academic discipline can rise to top positions. She claimed that a doctorate in education is increasingly being substituted for the Ph.D. but asserts that the Ph.D. provides a more adequate foundation for the responsibilities associated with a leadership position.

Success in obtaining a chief executive position is highly dependent upon whether one's career path is in academic or non-academic administration. Degrees in areas such as higher education administration are seen by many in academia as lacking in providing the necessary academic background to succeed in positions of leadership in the academic sector but are significantly represented in non-academic areas of higher education administration (Warner & DeFleur, 1993).

According to Buddemeier (1998), even though many senior administrators have a doctorate in higher education administration, this credential does not seem to be the preferred one for academic leadership positions, except in community colleges. Women interested in securing an academic leadership role may be more likely to enhance their career possibilities by pursuing a degree in an academic field such as a liberal arts discipline (Townsend & Wiese, 1991).

Advancing one's career in higher education administration is influenced not only by one's educational background but also by his or her academic experience in collegiate teaching and research (Townsend & Wiese, 1991). Warner, Brazzel, Allen, Bostick, and Marin (1988) maintained that the most direct path to entry-level academic administration is teaching in an academic department, which also will determine where a person is likely to secure a leadership position. Warner and colleagues (1988) argued that individuals who have had faculty experience are significantly more likely to hold administrative positions at universities, whereas those without faculty experience are more likely to be working in colleges, community colleges, and technical schools.

Anderson (1993) argued that, along with teaching, the "importance of scholarship should not be underestimated" (p. 37) because scholarship reinforces one's credibility in an academic environment. Theodore (1986) claimed that whether or not an administrative appointment entails teaching and research responsibilities, a teaching and research background "usually constitutes qualification for such an appointment" (p. 59).

According to Flynn (1993), to advance to a top leadership position in higher education, one has to have academic experience. "To reach the top position in the academic world, one has to have been a faculty member, probably a department chair, possibly an associate dean, certainly a vice president, before there is any reasonable expectation of becoming a president" (Flynn, 1993, p. 118).

Becoming a chair of an academic department is a common entry point to administration, but it can also have a negative effect on women. Hirsch (1994b) saw the department chairmanship as a "double-edged sword" (p. 1) for women, because it offers women an "invaluable opportunity for administrative leadership" (p. 1) while, at the same time, increasing stress in the struggle to be "both an effective leader and a productive scholar" (p. 1).

Educational preparation and training for senior administration seem a necessity in today's complex educational institutions. In examining the training of women in community college presidencies, the literature revealed that women prepare for top administrative positions in a variety of ways. Scholars propose that persons aspiring to become top administrators "obtain a doctorate degree and get a mentor" (Vaughan, 1989a, p. 3). In support of Vaughan's advice, Gillett-Karam (1988) reported that the majority of the community college women presidents in her study had earned doctorate degrees. About 40% of the women in Gillett-Karam's study began their administrative experience as department heads or division chairpersons. Women were twice as likely as men were to have been employed in public school administration prior to attaining their top positions. Vaughan's (1986) study noted that the majority of community college presidents accessed the presidency through the dean of instruction or chief instructional officer (CIO) positions. Vaughan's study focused primarily on men. Female presidents access through a diversity of ways, such as teaching, other administrative positions, or taking risks (e.g., changing jobs and assuming difficult assignments) (Sanders & Hammons, 1990; Winship, 1992).

In contrast to earlier studies of chief executive officers, Sanders and Hammons (1990) reported that community college women presidents came from diverse backgrounds and indicated no strong socioeconomic classification. Some grew up in low socioeconomic environments and struggled to get a college education, whereas others came from affluent homes and attended elite, private colleges.

To promote the advancement of women into careers in leadership, a growing number of fellowships, mentorships, conferences, and other leadership programs sponsor women faculty and administrators to prepare them to assume primary administrative positions. The American Council on Education Fellows Program sponsors women and minority candidates who aspire toward top administrative positions (Green, 1984). Also, organizations such as the American Association of University Women sponsor conferences targeted at leadership topics. Scholars and practitioners in community college educational training programs have responded to the need for women's leadership through organizations and educational training programs. The American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges has nurtured the advancement of women in community college leadership by offering professional development activities; providing a job bank, a national journal and newsletter; and recognizing women leaders. The National Institute for Leadership Development (NILD) is another entity committed to national and international programs that targets women in community colleges for leadership training through its annual weeklong workshops. Supporting organizations to the NILD are the League for Innovation in the Community College and the American Association of Women in Community Colleges (AAWCC, 1994).

The Kellogg Foundation has been a major supporter of leadership training in community colleges since the early 1960s and continues to do so into the 1990s. The Academy for Community College Leadership Advancement, Innovation, and Modeling (ACCLAIM) at North Carolina State University had a fellowship program targeted at advancing leadership training for women and minorities (Gillett-Karam, 1994). Leadership 2000, a Kellogg grant to the League for Innovation and the University of Texas at Austin, focuses some awareness training on women's issues.

The literature suggests the importance of women being academically prepared to assume the college presidency. Career planning has also been identified as essential for women desiring to advance into top administrative positions.

Career Planning

The second factor central to career advancement is career planning. Hill and Ragland (1995) stated that, historically, women have had little control over their career paths, so they did very little planning or goal setting. According to Hirsch (1994a), the lack of career planning has been especially harmful to women in light of the barriers they face, such as family obligations, sex-role stereotyping, and sexual harassment. Hirsch also maintained that all women need to develop career plans and to be prepared to make job changes based on the assumption of an unstable job market.

Albino (1992) argued that the reason women have not planned their careers very well is that they simply do not know how:

> Women are not inclined to think about jobs or to set goals; women do not take risks or compete well; they are painfully conspicuous in non-supportive work environments; and they do not have mentors to help them change behaviors or deal with the work environment." (p. 49)

Although, in the past, women did not emphasize career planning to the same degree as did their male counterparts, that situation should change drastically because females represent "a critical mass in the work force" (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992, p. 217). By the year 2000, half of all workers will be women, and over 80% of females from ages 25 to 54 will be working (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992).

More women are entertaining careers in higher education, and they are being forced to think about what it takes to be an administrator under what might be called "exclusionary circumstances" (Moore, 1990, p. 8). Ross and Green (1990) argued that in higher education there is an unwritten "code of career mobility" (p. 68) and, by understanding the organizational culture of the "academic marketplace" (p. 68), administrations can overcome potential barriers. Avila (1993) concurred, stating that women pursuing careers in education administration must "devise special strategies" (p. 54) in order to overcome internal and external barriers.

Sagaria and Dickens (1990) emphasized career planning because they claimed administrators are likely to stay at one institution:

> Regardless of what administrators plan or anticipate for their future work lives, prospects are very good that each will remain affiliated with a single organization. Therefore, thinking about a career in one institution is not only meaningful, but also imperative. (p. 19)

It is becoming increasingly important that women wishing to advance into leadership positions in higher education actively plan and develop both short- and long-term career paths for themselves. LeBlanc (1993) and McDade (1990) claimed that "anyone can develop a personal plan for career improvement by taking advantage of a wide range of professional development programs" (p. 47). Harter (1993) stated that women wishing to move into leadership roles must first learn to take themselves less seriously and have a sense of humor. Women should learn as much as possible about both the organizational dynamics and the culture of the institution in which they work, while, at the same time, retaining their own values (Harter, 1993).

Ausejo (1993) concluded that a woman cannot plan her career effectively without taking significant risks. Women need to contribute to their own success by "adopting career tactics that are carefully thought out and well timed" (Powell, 1993, p. 217).

Career Paths

The third factor central to career advancement of female college presidents is career paths. According to Twombly (1990), higher education administration is characterized by "ill-defined career paths, multiple entrance points, and lack of explicit criteria for determining mobility" (p. 17). Career paths in higher education are less defined than one would think (Ross & Green, 1990), and even the smallest institutions might have more than one "career system" (Moore & Twombly, 1990, p. 110), making it difficult for women to plan their career advancement.

Warner and DeFleur (1993) suggested that career paths in higher education for men and women are structured differently. For example, women are more likely to build their careers in one institution than are their male counterparts (Moore, 1982). On the basis of Sagaria and Johnsrud's (1989) findings that the predominant method women use to advance their careers is institutional position change, it would seem that there should be more women in top positions. However, as the literature indicates, this is not the case.

Women face more barriers in terms of career mobility than do their male counterparts, and Twale (1992) attributed part of the problem to the traditional formal college and university bureaucratic structure" (p. 6). According to the author, this structure is based on a hierarchical career ladder that allows movement only through "fixed positions and the securing of successive appointments with increasing levels of responsibility, authority, and salary" (p. 7). Twale concluded that this model is characteristic of the typical male career pathway and accounts for much of the underrepresentation of female top administrators.

Cohen and March (1974) formulated a career ladder consisting of five rungs. The rungs are faculty member, department chair, dean, provost, and president. A similar pathway has emerged for community college presidents, even though this career ladder was created with the four-year institutional president in mind.

The findings are consistent that the career path most likely to lead to a community college presidency is the pathway represented by academic affairs (Boggs, 1988; Green, 1988; Moore, 1988). A larger percentage of community college presidents come from this pathway than from any other. More specifically, research shows that the position most frequently held prior to the community college presidency is chief academic officer and the career lines to the presidency consist primarily of administrative positions within the community college (Moore, Twombly, & Martorana, 1985; Twombly, 1985, 1986; Vaughan, 1986).

Vaughan (1986, 1990) confirmed that moving through the academic pipeline to the position of dean of instruction or academic vice president improves one's chances of becoming president. Indeed, "the most traveled pathway on the way to the president's office is the one leading directly from the dean of instruction's office" (Vaughan, 1990, p. 42). Researchers from all segments of higher education have confirmed that, as with men, the positions women hold immediately before attaining the presidency are primarily academic, such as vice president for academic affairs, vice president for instruction, dean of instructional services, or assistant to the president in some capacity (Mancini, 1993; Oglesby, 1993; Taylor, 1981; Winship & Amey, 1992).

Twombly (1986) found that the positions of chief business officer and chief student affairs officer "appeared to be ceiling positions and neither were sources of presidents" (p. 33). Moreover, she reported that the case of chief student affairs officers "is of particular concern to the career advancement of women" because women are represented in higher numbers within student affairs than within academic affairs.

Student affairs no longer appears to be a "ceiling position" to the presidency, but it is far from the most frequently traveled pathway to the community college presidency. Vaughan and Weisman (1997) reported that twice as many women entered the presidency from the position of chief student affairs officer than did men. Knopp (1995) found that women administrators are still more likely to be employed in external affairs or student services than in academic, administrative, or executive areas.

Boggs (1988) found that women were limited in their search for a presidency by lack of mobility and asserted that probabilities for advancement for women should likely improve if the candidates were willing to move and if they sought line experience in instruction. Moore (1988) reported that women are able to build careers in administrative areas such as student personnel and financial aid but are underrepresented in areas such as academic affairs. Thus, research indicates that career mobility is somewhat more difficult for women wanting to attain the presidency because they are on the wrong pathway.

Although the academic deanship is most likely to lead to the community college presidency, there are many other routes as well. Twombly (1986) reported that women who are already community college presidents are more likely to be chosen president by another community college. This finding was confirmed by Vaughan and Weisman's (1997) study of community college governing boards, in which 75% of trustees reported that their first choice among equally qualified candidates from a variety of positions would be a president from another community college. Therefore, potential female community college presidents are at a disadvantage because women hold fewer presidencies and only 20% have held more than one presidency.

Vaughan and Weisman (1997) found that 50% of all women held the position of chief academic officer prior to attaining their first presidency, 12% were the chief student affairs officer, and 7% were the chief academic and student affairs officer. One-third of all female presidents were internal candidates at the college at which they assumed their first presidency, and one-third assumed their first presidency in the state in which they finished high school.

In her qualitative study of male and female community college presidents, Winship (1992) found that academic terminal degrees, career planning, and mentors were important formal experiences along the career paths of community college presidents. Differences between male and female community college presidents were found within these experiences. Men were more likely to have the professional goal of becoming a community college president before pursuing a doctorate, whereas women did not identify this goal until they completed the doctorate. Women were found to be more likely than men, however, to have a formalized career plan.

Evans (1985) maintained there is no clear career path for women in higher education and, because women must combine a number of roles, both professional and personal, there is a need for flexibility. D. B. Jones (1993) concurred with Evans, arguing that women are forced to assume multiple roles in terms of family responsibilities and work-related responsibilities, which contributes to a lack of career advancement. Jones concluded that colleges and universities must work to develop an atmosphere that is sensitive to the issues women face, and one that is "conducive to the development of women in leadership roles" (p. 54). Sederberg and Mueller (1992) agreed, stating that there is a need to develop a career advancement model for women that incorporates family and "life events" (p. 10) that women are likely to encounter during their careers. The authors argued that, as women move into higher education in greater numbers, opportunities for them to pursue careers in the field are potentially greater, which creates an even greater need to study the career paths of women.

Professional and Career Development

In addition to looking at the career paths of community college presidents, it is also important to address professional and career development strategies as the fourth factor central to career advancement of female presidents. Green (1988) asserted that leadership development in higher education administrators has been mainly an informal process and that leaders have risen through the ranks, learning administration as they go along.

In the wake of difficult times facing higher education, many institutions are searching for stronger and more visionary leadership. Administrators have looked to professional organizations and leadership training programs for guidance and assistance in their preparation for the presidency and for support once they are in the president's office. An organization known to nurture the advancement of women in community college leadership is the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges (AAWCJC). This organization offers professional development activities, publishes a newsletter and national journal, furnishes a job bank, and provides recognition for women leaders. Shavlik and Touchton (1983) reported a perceived relationship between leadership program participation and career movement, suggesting that these programs are effecting their desired outcomes. For example, female community college presidents participate in leadership development activities, such as Leaders for Change programs sponsored by AAWCJC (Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993). According to Green (1988), such structured opportunities can help to enhance a leader's "personal and intellectual growth" (p. 24).

Fife and Goodchild (1991) concurred with Green (1988), maintaining that structured leadership and professional development programs can help to develop the skills of potential administrators. The authors highlighted the vast array of leadership and professional development programs, unique to the United States, that are available to higher educational professionals and offer the following:

> These programs can substitute for the management and leadership training of higher education degrees while also building leadership competencies and skills over the entire career span. Because of the availability of these programs, U. S. college and university administrators are less locked into career tracks. They can both build unique specializations and acquire broad, interdisciplinary knowledge appropriate for growing responsibilities and roles. (Fife & Goodchild, 1991, p. 100)

Leadership programs and conferences in the 1990s continue to offer opportunities for women administrators to network and be matched with mentors. For example, many participants in Florida's Educational Leadership Enhancement Grant from 1993-94 (as cited in Buddemeier, 1998) reported that the program contributed to their advancement or promotion, and many others reported that the experience offered opportunity for networking, professional collaboration, and improved colleague relationships. Faulconer (1995) found that female community college administrators (including presidents) are likely to receive training that assists in their career development and in their present positions. Conference attendance and workshop participation were the most frequently reported types of training.

According to Anderson (1993), women need to seek opportunities for leadership outside one's immediate position or area of specialization. Seeking outside leadership opportunities does not mean attending only formal structured programs for professional development but, according to the author, women should "gain credible experience at the center of the institution through classroom teaching, service on curriculum committees, and involvement in issues of current concern such as community college transfers, articulation with four year colleges and universities, and grant writing" (p. 37). Anderson contended that women need to take advantage of opportunities that will give them an in-depth understanding of their current assignments as well as experiences in related areas that reflect the mission and values of the entire institution rather than just one particular division.

Winship (1992) found that having a support system or a confidant and being a member of service and professional organizations were important informal experiences on the pathway to the presidency. According to Davis and Astin (1990), "To the extent that women in academe are isolated and even alienated, networking and mentorship provide them with potential avenues for integration" (p. 69). Moreover, these types of training experiences and professional development opportunities help women get through or around the "old boys' network." Buddemeier (1998) asserted:

> This network is not a formal organization. The "old boys' network" is an informal system in which men, purposefully or not, keep women out of top-level positions by referring only men to advanced positions and by passing along information unofficially to other men and thereby exclude women" (p. 28)

McMillan (1986) reported that the role of higher education's leading national women's organizations, specifically the American Council on Education's Office of Women in Higher Education and the Association of American Colleges, is "going the old boys' network one better" (p. 16). Buddemeier (1998) contended that "if the network can't be broken or infiltrated, women must form their own networks" (p. 27). Women's networks were essential during the 1980s, as women were often excluded from popular men's organizations such as the Rotary Club.

A review of the literature revealed four central factors in the career advancement of female community college presidents. These four factors are academic background, career planning, career paths, and professional development. I examine women and career influences more fully by discussing how role models and mentors influence women's occupational choice, administrative behavior, and career mobility.

Women and Career Influences

Although much of the literature on female higher education administrators focuses on the negative factors that have prevented women from rising to the top, there is a much smaller base of literature on positive influences that help women advance their careers. Role models and mentors have been shown to have positive effects on women's occupational choice, administrative behavior, and career mobility.

Mentoring Defined

Since the Golden Age of Greece, the mentoring process has been viewed as an important and effective manner of preparing leaders by passing on knowledge and advice. The term is derived from Mentor, the name of a friend of Odysseus in the Greek legend *The Odyssey.* Many successful administrators in higher education have achieved their positions because someone older and wiser recognized their potential for leadership and encouraged them to develop that potential (Bower, 1993). This practice, known as mentoring, is considered to be an important tool for professional development of female leaders. The mentor–protégé relationship can be defined as a special type of relationship between two people based on mutual respect (Atterberry, 1985). Moore and Salimbene (1981) defined the mentoring relationship as a lasting and professionally centered relationship between two individuals, in which the more experienced individual, the mentor, advises and guides the career of the less experienced and typically younger protégé. A mentor supports, guides, and counsels another person to help him or her "navigate" the world of work (O'Leary & Mitchell, 1990, p. 66).

According to Buddemeier (1998), mentoring is not to be confused with role modeling. She asserted that "role modeling is a passive influence in which an aspiring administrator identifies a person who possesses the skills that he or she wishes to emulate" (p. 23). In role modeling, unlike mentoring, there is no need for direct interaction between the observer and the role model. Therefore, an individual's role model can be anyone he or she wishes, whereas a mentor must be someone with whom he or she can interact and communicate.

Mentoring is needed in all professions, but having a mentor to point out the right direction and provide advice is invaluable in higher education. Although women can be successful without a mentor, research has shown the positive effects to be a reduction of entrance time into administrative positions, assistance in self-visualization of administrative roles, and guidance in career preparation for administrative roles or positions (Luebkemann & Clemens, 1994). In other words, mentoring and role models can positively influence the occupation one chooses and obtains, the behavior once he or she has gained entry to the position, and his or her success in moving through the academic ranks.

The research concerning mentor relationships and influences on top women administrators within the community college gives insight into the potential influences of mentors on occupational choice, specifically the community college presidency. A national survey by the Pennsylvania State University Center for the Study of Higher Education (as cited in Buddemeier, 1998) found that 35% of women in the top eight administrative line positions at community colleges said that a mentor had assisted them in obtaining their current position. Capozzoli (1989) found that the majority of senior female community college administrators in her survey had mentors. She found the relationship with the mentor to be useful in women administrators' career planning and career choice. Canada's (1989) research sought to understand more fully the influence role models and mentor relationships have on career choice of women administrators in higher education. The results of her study suggest that more women administrators in higher education selected their careers as a result of having positive role models.

Mentors can be colleagues and supervisors who act as role models, consultants, and advisors for the protégé. In the role-model function, the mentor shows the protégé standards of behavior and professional activity. The protégé believes the mentor is a skilled performer who is worthy of imitation when dealing with conflict, interacting with colleagues, supervising employees, and balancing personal life with professional demands. As consultant and advisor, the mentor functions as teacher, providing information on the basis of his or her experience and knowledge. The mentee is shown the covert and overt political system, the standards of performance for the profession, and ways of maintaining a personal sense of self in relation to the work self (Schmidt & Wolfe, 1989).

One often associates behavior with attitudes, feelings, and beliefs. Therefore, a review of the literature about women's feelings as they relate to administrative leadership positions can best be expressed through Stokes (1984), who reported that approximately 60% of all women in educational administrative positions have a "powerless feeling" in their positions. For example, 74% felt ignored by their male counterparts during important discussions (even within their own areas of concern), and 81% felt that they were not consulted as frequently as were males. Vaughan (1983) reported that 75% of female deans felt that mentors were highly influential in their careers. The literature on the influence of mentoring on administrative behavior showed that mentoring can assist women in learning to accept power and responsibility and in teaching them to use these tools resourcefully.

According to Vardi (1980), career mobility "is a function of the interaction between organizational attributes (which establish the type of roles, the available channels, and the criteria for career movement) and the individual determinants (demographic characteristics as well as behavioral processes)" (p. 347). Moore (1982) contended that mentoring appears to be a "potent association for the advancement of individuals' careers" (p. 57). Moore added that simply having a mentor may explain why women have advanced to academic administration at all. As Hill and Ragland (1995) argued:

> Mentorships have the capacity to provide critical information that has been especially scarce in the orientation of women breaking ground in a new area or along a new path of a leadership role . . . . When the mentor supports, validates and reassures, the mentee's self-confidence is enhanced and her or his outlook is improved. (p. 74)

Cooper (1992) reported mentoring as one of the influences that helped women achieve the presidency of universities. Winship (1992) studied the career paths of 10 community college presidents and found that all emphasized the importance of mentors in career advancement. Despain (1991) studied and developed profiles of the women presidents of 63 community colleges, representing 73% of the population of women CEOs. He found that the average female community college president in 1991 was white, 48.6 years old, and married with two children, and had a doctorate in education and 12 years of higher education experience. He also reported the average female community college president at some time in her career had a male mentor.

An important part of helping women in and into leadership roles continues to be mentoring. "Mentoring and role modeling are proactive ways of promoting the success of minorities and women in leadership positions" (Deese & McKay, 1991, p. ii). Researchers contend that it is essential for women to have mentors to increase female representation at top-level positions within the community college (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Bower (1993) argued that, for women in higher education administration, mentoring can help women "make it in a world not necessarily familiar or accommodating" (p. 91). She further stated that "in a world predominantly composed of, run by, and culturally designed for men, mentoring for women becomes a requirement rather than a nicety" (p. 91).

LeBlanc (1993) concurred with Bower, arguing that women need good mentors to build confidence and encourage professional growth. She maintained that "mentoring is critical in meeting a variety of needs for women in higher education administration and can positively impact and enhance their careers" (p. 48). Successful mentor relationships often result in people who fit in more quickly, earn higher salaries, and are generally happier with the progress of their careers (Hauter, 1993).

There is no question that women need good mentors to advance professionally, because mentors are critical in meeting a variety of women's needs (Flynn, 1993).

According to Flynn, women "need the indirect and resourceful guidance that mentoring provides" (p. 48).

The gender of the role model has also been shown to be important. Capozzoli (1989) found that women who obtained positions in higher education administration usually had mentors who were influential in advancing their careers and that their role models were often other women. Having a role model of the same sex has been found to be extremely important for women (Shakeshaft, 1989). This finding is consistent with that of Bennett and Shayner (1988), who argued that all administrators have an obligation to develop women's leadership potential, but women probably have a greater sense of responsibility and urgency to do so because of the values and expectations women bring to leadership positions. These authors felt that women have a moral obligation to assist in the development of their female peers, and that doing so would greatly increase the number of potential leaders in the workforce.

Cullen and Luna (1993) concluded that mentor relationships are not only beneficial to women but to the institution as well. According to the authors, mentoring "plays a vital role in future organizational growth, stability and leadership" (p. 135). The overwhelming number of articles and the common wisdom holds that mentoring is important in career advancement (Burke, McKeen, & McKenna, 1990; Cook, 1989; Fitt & Newton, 1981; Fitzpatrick, 1992; Henning & Jardim, 1977; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kanter, 1993; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Vaughan, 1990).

Summary

A review and synthesis of the literature related to female community college presidents revealed four factors that are central to a study of women community college presidents and career advancement. These factors, which are academic preparation, career planning, career paths, and professional development, demonstrate the importance of women developing a strong academic foundation, setting goals, and actively seeking strategies to obtain leadership positions. Further, a discussion of how role models and mentors influence occupational choice, administrative behavior, and career mobility has been presented. The literature also revealed the importance of mentoring in enhancing and influencing women's pursuit of top administrative positions and the community college presidency.

An exploration of career development theories is also important to the study of women and career advancement. These theories describe influences in career selection and the self-knowledge one should possess to make informed career decisions.

Career Development Theory

Career development theory has had a relatively short history. Reflecting on this, Isaacson and Brown (1993) commented that "the behavioural sciences," of which career development theory is a part, "are still in a developmental stage" (p. 20). Parsons (1909), credited as the founder of vocational guidance, identified three elements of career selection: self-knowledge, knowledge of the world of work, and "true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts" (p. 5).

Out of these beginnings, trait-and-factor theories that focused on the content of career choice, such as characteristics of the individual and the workplace, evolved. Developmental theories, which placed more emphasis on the stages and process of career development, followed later. More recently, theorists have focused on both content and process, including the interaction between these and the role of cognition in the process. Before exploring the field of career development, career and career development must be defined.

From the time of Parsons (1909), the terms *career, vocation,* and *occupation* have often been used synonymously (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). Traditional definitions restricted *career* to a professional work life that included advancement, and several researchers have proposed broadening this conceptual definition (e.g., Byrne & Beavers, 1991). The Department of Education and Science (1989) defined career as

> the variety of occupational roles which individuals will undertake throughout life. It includes: paid and self-employment; the different occupations which a person may have over the years and periods of unemployment; and unpaid occupations such as that of student, voluntary worker or parent. (p. 2)

The concept of career has expanded to include prevocational and postvocational activities, as in the definition Super proposed:

> the sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his preoccupational, occupational and postoccupational life; includes work related roles such as those of student, employee, and pensioner, together with

> complementary vocational, familial and civil roles. (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 1999, p. 3)

A more concise definition, that of Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence (1989), described career as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (p. 8), again emphasizing the central themes of work and time.

Collin and Watts (1996) discussed the need to focus on career as a subjective construction of the individual rather than something that is objective, and Herr (1992) emphasized that careers do not exist as jobs or occupations but rather are created by individuals. I concur with these more recent constructions of career, perceiving that people develop a career on the basis of their perceptions of, and attitudes toward, career.

These broader definitions of career draw attention to the concept of career development, which Brown and Brooks (1990) described as "for most people a lifelong process of getting ready to choose, choosing, and typically continuing to make choices from among the many occupations available in our society" (p. xvii). Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951), who proposed that occupational choice is a developmental process occurring over a number of years, were first to advance the concept of career development. Their original theory, which assumed that the process was completed in early adulthood, was later revised to recognize occupational choice as a lifelong process of decision making (Ginzberg, 1972, 1984). More recently, Pryor (1985) described career development as a series of continuous decisions about career choice. Wolfe and Kolb (1980) defined career development as follows:

> Career development involves one's whole life, not just occupation. As such, it concerns the whole person. . . . More than that, it concerns him or her in the ever-changing contexts of his or her life. The environmental pressures and constraints, the bonds that tie him or her to significant others, responsibilities to children and aging parents, the total structure of one's circumstances are also factors that must be understood and reckoned with. In these terms, career development and personal development converge. Self and circumstances—evolving, changing, unfolding in mutual interaction—constitute the focus and the drama of career development. (p. 10)

I favor this definition because it encompasses the individual, the environment, interaction, and change as the key elements of career development.

Career development theories have been categorized into two groups: content and process. The theories that focus on content include Trait-and Factor-Theory, Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice, Theory of Work Adjustment, Bordin's Psychodynamic Model of Career Choice, and Brown's Values-Based, Holistic Model. The theories that focus on process include the work of Ginzberg, Super, Tiedeman and O'Hara, Gottfredson, and Krumboltz.

Content Theories

A study of content theories takes one historically to the origins of career development theory and the work of Frank Parsons at the turn of the 20th century. In essence, theories of content "predict career choices from individual characteristics" (Minor, 1992, p. 14). According to Patton and McMahon (1999), "a study of theories focusing on content is important for two reasons: It introduces many of the key concepts essential to an understanding of career development, and it provides a historical overview of the evolution of this field of study" (p. 12).

The technology provided by the psychology of individual differences, such as inventories and psychological tests, paved the way for the development of what is the oldest and most widely used career development theory (Sharf, 1992), the trait-and-factor theory. Trait-and-factor theory is founded on the notion that individuals are different and their different capacities can be measured and related to occupations.

According to trait-and-factor theory, choosing an occupation means trying to match an individual to a job so that his or her needs will be met and his or her job performance will be satisfactory (Brown, 1990). "The terms *trait* and *factor* refer to the assessment of characteristics of the person and the job" (Sharf, 1992, p. 17). Traits are individual characteristics that can be measured through testing, and factors are characteristics required for successful job performance. Patton and McMahon (1999) asserted that traits were originally viewed as biologically based, and therefore unchanging, and were later viewed as learned and subject to change. The term *trait-and-factor* implies a matching between individuals and jobs: Career selection is seen to occur as a result of understanding the relationship between knowledge about self and knowledge about occupations (Chartrand, 1991). This process clearly reflects Parsons' (1909) concept of vocational guidance and in doing so establishes his place as the founder of what is known as trait-and-factor theory.

There are some assumptions in the trait-and-factor theory that invite criticism. For example, some critics question whether people actually use reasoning in all career choices and whether all people actually have a reasoned choice in relation to career (Roberts, 1977). Other assumptions that have also been questioned are whether occupational choice is a single event, whether single types of people are found in each type of job, or whether there is a single right goal for each career decision maker (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Isaacson and Brown (1993) claimed that trait-and-factor theory does not account for the broad range of individual differences in every occupational group.

Criticism has also been leveled at trait-and-factor theory for failing to "consider [adequately] and define the universe of variables that impinge on the occupational choice-making process and define causal relationships among traits and variables (such as socioeconomic status)" (Brown, 1990, p. 346). Zunker (1994) was critical of the failure to account for growth and change in traits, such as interests, values, aptitudes, achievements, and personality characteristics. Patton and McMahon (1999) concluded that "trait-and-factor theory is not a theory of career development but rather a collection of theories based on influences that contribute to career development" (p. 17).

Holland's theory of vocational choice was conceptualized as a trait-and-factor theory and "remains in the tradition of differential psychology" (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990, p. 47). Holland's work has been described as "simple and eminently practical" (Hackett, Lent, & Greenhaus, 1991 p. 9). Holland's (1966, 1973, 1985) theory illustrates a person–environment perspective and can be categorized as a person–environment fit approach. Underlying Holland's theory is the assumption that vocational interests are one aspect of personality and therefore a "description of an individual's vocational interests is also a description of the individual's personality" (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990, p. 39). Weinrach and Srebalus (1990) described Holland's theory as "structural–interactive" because it links personality and job types.

Holland's theory described the career decision-maker in terms of six personality or interest types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional. Holland's type theory is represented diagrammatically by a hexagon showing the relationships between the personality or occupational types (Figure 1). Holland proposed that these personality types are related to needs and that an individual's type is indicative of his or her major needs. Holland (1992) claimed that "individuals seek out work environments that are compatible with their attitudes and values and that allow them to use their skills and abilities—a corollary of which is that people in similar jobs will have similar personalities" (p. 21). Behavior, according to Holland, is determined by interaction between the individual and the environment and determines factors such as job satisfaction, stability and achievement, educational choice, and personal competence and susceptibility to influence. These outcomes can all be predicted from a knowledge of personality types and environmental models (Holland, 1992). Although matching is central to Holland's approach, his attention to interaction places him among the person–environment fit theorists rather than among the trait-and-factor theorists (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

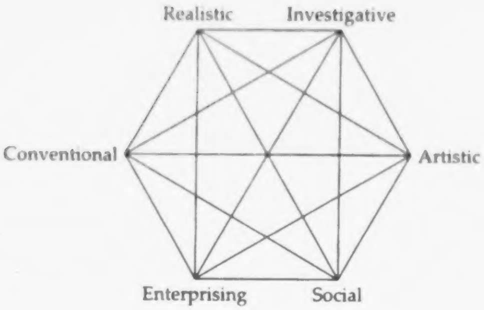

Figure 1. Hexagonal model for defining the relations among Holland's personality types and environments and their interactions (Patton & McMahon, 1999, p. 21).

Dawis and Lofquist's (1976) theory of work adjustment "provides a model of conceptualizing the interaction between individuals and work environments" (p. 55) and is "founded on four basic psychological concepts: ability, reinforcement value, satisfaction, and person–environment correspondence" (Dawis, 1984, p. 34). In essence, an individual exists in a dynamic relationship with his or her work environment, in which he or she seeks to develop a satisfactory relationship by making continual adjustments. However, according to Patton and McMahon (1999), the theory of work adjustment places greater emphasis on adjustment over time than does Holland's theory, and, in so doing, work adjustment theory more clearly establishes itself as a person–environment fit theory.

Bordin's (1990) psychodynamic model of career choice emphasizes the development of personality in relation to the role of work and play in an individual's life.

A basic tenet of the theory is that individuals seek enjoyment in work as in other areas of their lives. According to Patton and McMahon (1999), Bordin proposed that play is intrinsically satisfying and that the satisfaction of simply engaging in an activity distinguishes play from work.

In terms of career choice and satisfaction, Bordin (1990) described the evolution of personality as the mechanism that guides cognitive processes at times of career choice, whether those choices have presented themselves for external or internal reasons. Patton and McMahon (1999) described external reasons as those including particular stages of the education system. Internal reasons, according to Patton and McMahon (1999), include the desire for increased work satisfaction. In making choices, the individual conducts a self-assessment and gauges the probabilities of success based on intrinsic satisfaction, which may include "curiosity, precision, power, expressiveness, and concern with right and wrong and justice, as well as . . . nurturance" (Bordin, 1990, p. 114). Bordin's approach, according to Patton and McMahon (1999), is a significant move away from the tradition of matching approaches, with their emphasis on objectivity.

Brown's (1996) Values-based, Holistic Model of Career Choice acknowledges the concept of development and the broader context in which individuals exist. The first focus of his theory is on values and the role they play in career choice, and the second focus is on career counseling.

Brown (1995) claimed that individuals judge their own performance and that of others against a core set of beliefs or values that are important not only in the selection of life roles but also in the satisfaction derived from life roles (Brown & Crace, 1996).

Brown (1996) asserted that expected outcomes are the most important source of motivation in decision making and that values are the basis on which individuals decide which outcomes are more important than others; that is, "values form the basis for attributing work to situations and objects" (Brown & Crace, 1996, p. 212). He also claimed that "values have been the overlooked dimension in the counseling process as well as in the research that has been conducted on career development" (Brown, 1996, p. 368). Therefore, he has attempted to draw attention to the function of values in decision-making and career counseling and to set values in the broader context of life roles and life space.

Fundamental to Brown's (1996) model is the concept that each person develops a relatively small number of values that "dictate cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns" (p. 341). Brown believed that individuals are exposed to value-laden messages throughout their lives from a variety of sources, including family, friends, and the media. Values, therefore, "develop as a result of the interaction between inherited characteristics and experience" (Brown, 1996, p. 340).

The content theories presented in this discussion span the period from the early 1950s to the mid-1990s and reflect trends in conceptualizations of career theory. For example, early theories such as those of Parson and the early work of Holland are less dynamic because they pay less attention to the process of career development. Refinements of Holland's work and later theories reflect career development theorists' acceptance of the concept of development by the early 1970s.

Content theories, however, do not provide extensive explanations of the career development. This omission has paved the way for theories that focus on *process* in career development.

Process Theories

The 1950s were a time of change in the history of career theory, as researchers began advocating developmental theories, which view career choice as a developmental process rather than as a matching exercise. According to Patton and McMahon (1999), developmental theories do not compete with matching theories, rather the two groups complement each other. As Super (1992) stated, it is not valid to ask which group of theories is better, since neither is "sufficient without the other" (p. 59).

Developmental approaches take into account that career choice is not just a single static decision but rather a dynamic developmental process involving a series of decisions made over time (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Four theories are discussed to illustrate developmental approaches to career development: the work of Ginzberg and his colleagues (Ginzberg, 1972, 1984; Ginzberg et al., 1951); Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994); Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963), Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990); and Gottfredson (1981, 1996).

The work of Ginzberg and colleagues (1951) is historically significant in that it represents one of the earliest deviations from the existing static trait-and-factor theories and, as such, is a vital contribution to developmental theory. Ginzberg and colleagues' theory is the first to have focused on occupational choice from a developmental standpoint. Ginzberg and his colleagues (1951) proposed that career development begins in early childhood and progresses through three broad stages that conclude with career choice in early adulthood. During this time, many career decisions are made as the individual deals with preadolescence and adolescence. Ginzberg's theory identifies the three stages through which the individual passes: fantasy, tentative, and realistic stages. The tentative stage is comprised of the substages of interest, capacity, value, and transition, and the realistic stage is divided into substages of exploration, crystallization, and specification. The theory proposed that individuals have moved through these stages by the end of their late teens or early 20s (Ginzberg et al., 1951).

Ginzberg (1972, 1984) revised his original theory after conceding that career development does not conclude in early adulthood but rather is a lifelong process in which individuals continue to seek satisfaction from career decisions by improving "the fit between their changing career goals and the realities of the world of work" (Ginzberg, 1984, p. 180). His reformulated theory was sociopsychological rather than developmental, because he accounted for "reality factors," locating the individual at the center of the decision-making process as the "prime mover" or "principal actor" (Ginzberg, 1972, p. 175). The concept of person–environment fit is evident in this theory because the process of choice has now become dynamic rather than static, with ideas of lifelong career choice, work satisfaction, and adjustments to meet personal needs.

According to Patton and McMahon (1999), the work of Ginzberg and his colleagues has served as a major stimulus in the development of career theory. Further, Patton and McMahon asserted that Ginzberg's theory is significant as the first developmental theory and Ginzberg's (1972, 1984) revisions are significant for their ability to respond to changes in thinking about career development.

Although Ginzberg was a forerunner in the field of career development, the work of Super "encompasses the broader perspective of life span career development" (Patton & McMahon, 1999, p. 40). Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994) shifted the focus of career development away from approaches based on differential psychology, changed "the focus of vocational psychology from occupations to careers" (Savickas, 1994, p. 22) and provided "the main impetus to expand vocational guidance to encompass career counseling" (Savickas, 1994, p. 4). Super, therefore, made a major contribution to the field of career development both theoretically and practically.

Super's most lasting contribution to career development theory is his life-span, life-space approach, in which he not only presented a stage model of career development but also "constructed an overarching framework within which to explore career development" (Savickas, 1994, p. 22). Super's key concepts are contained in a list of 14 propositions that illustrate the breadth of his theory. These propositions draw upon components of career development "taken from developmental, differential, social, personality, and phenomenological psychology and held together by self-concept and learning theory" (Super, 1990, p. 1990).

The concept of self is central to Super's theory because the processing of the life-span, life-space information occurs within self. The terms *life span* and *life space* basically represent the content and process of career development.

Super (1980, 1990, 1992) identified five different vocational development stages that individuals pass through as they progress through their careers. These stages are growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline or disengagement. Each life stage is named to reflect "the nature of its principal life-stage task" (Super Savickas, & Super, 1996, p. 131). During the growth stage, the individual attends school, develops work habits, gains control over his or her life and becomes future oriented (Super et al., 1996). The exploratory stage is characterized by identification of interests, capacities, work-related self-image, and relationships between work and non-work activities. The third stage, establishment, focuses on an increased commitment to career, advancement, and growth and on stability in one's personal life. During this stage, the individual gains employment. During the maintenance stage, one holds on to accomplishments and maintains his or her self-concept. In the final stage, the decline or disengagement stage, an individual disengages from work and career and forms a new self-image, often planning for retirement and a reduction in workload.

Super's (1957) original theory was the first to address women's career issues. In acknowledging the central role of homemaking in women's lives and the related increase in numbers of women entering the workforce, he identified seven categories of women's career patterns. Even though these patterns have changed since their first formulation, they were important attempts to illustrate the relationship between work and family throughout women's lives.

Super's (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 1999) seven categories of women's career patterns were specific developmental stages through which an individual passed in formulating career decisions. He modified his theoretical formulation to suggest the notion of a "lifespace," in which the many varied roles that contribute to a broad notion of career could be acknowledged. Super (1992) maintained that career choice was essentially a decision based on self-concept, and no account was taken of differences between the sexes in the relationship between self-concept and work. Yet, as Perun and Bielby (1981) argued, "We cannot assume that the process of self-concept development . . . is identical for both sexes" (p. 248). Irrespective of the broad available roles for women that Super suggested, Fitzgerald and Weitzman (1992) emphasized that "traditional socialization processes do not prepare women for the complex nature of the choices they will make or the life roles they will face" (p. 135).

Super's model included many factors that influence career development. His constant revisions and open-mindedness on the breadth of career development made a lasting contribution to the field (Blustein, 1997; Herr, 1997; Savickas, 1997).

Tiedeman and O'Hara's (1963) view of career development as an ongoing process of differentiating ego identity reflected their choice of Erikson's (1959) psychosocial theory of ego identity as a basis for their career decision-making model (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990). Like Super (1953), they proposed a developmental model of stages through which individuals pass during their lifetime. Unlike Super, they placed greater emphasis on personal development. Critical to this self-development are biological, social, and situational factors. "Their [Tiedeman and O'Hara] decision making model is an attempt to help individuals bring to conscious awareness all of the factors inherent in making decisions so that they will be able to make choices based on full knowledge of themselves and appropriate external information" (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992, p. 56). The model assists the individual in understanding the "organization of self and environment" (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedman, 1990, p. 316).

Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (1981, 1996) was "concerned with both the content of career aspirations and their course of development" (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 181). Like other process theories already discussed, this model assumed that "career choice is a developmental process beginning in childhood; occupational aspirations reflect people's efforts to implement their self-concepts; and satisfaction with career choice depends on how well that choice fits the self-concept" (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 181). Gottfredson's theory is similar to the person–environment fit theories and the concept that "people seek jobs compatible with their images of themselves" (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 546).

Gottfredson's (1981) model consisted of four stages. During these stages, individuals become more self-aware and narrow their occupational options by eliminating those that are no longer acceptable on the basis of factors such as gender and social class. This process is known as *circumscription*. *Compromise*, as defined by Gottfredson, is a process of vetting the preferred alternatives on the basis of "external reality" (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 195) or accessibility. Compromise refers to "obstacles or opportunities in the social or economic environment that affect one's chance of getting into a particular occupation" (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 548).

With respect to career choice, Gottfredson's model highlights the relevance of sex-role socialization of women and men, whereby individuals make decisions based on sex type of occupations and perceptions of opportunities and barriers. Gender type, as explained by Patton and McMahon (1999), influences career choice because individuals narrow their perceived appropriate occupational alternatives on the basis of societal notions of gender-appropriate careers.

There is considerable overlap among the process theories. The main contribution of this group of theories has been their concept of life-span career development. The most significant content influence in this group of theories is that of self-concept. Self-concept is closely linked with process influences because the career development process involves the implementation of self-concept (Betz, 1994). These theories also acknowledge the context in which career development takes place.

Content and Process Theories

Krumboltz and his colleagues formulated the first adaptation of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to the career field. The theory was first formulated in 1976 (Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1976), and a significant restatement was published in 1979 (Krumboltz, 1979). Krumboltz's learning theory of career decision making was one of the first to address both the content and process of career decision making.

The learning theory of career decision making seeks to explain how people become employed in the wide variety of available occupations. The learning theory extends trait-and-factor theory in its attempt to explain the process of person–job congruence. Patton and McMahon (1999) explained that

> the theory, which is based on learning principles, suggests that individuals learn about themselves, their preferences, and the world of work through direct and

> indirect experiences. They then take action based on these knowledge- and skill-based learnings. (p. 59)

According to Krumboltz, four categories of factors influence an individual's career decision-making process: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990).

Social learning theory is significant to the development of career theory because it recognizes the importance of a wide range of influences on career choice rather than focusing on a single influence (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Context is important in the social learning approach to career decision making because "the social learning theory of career decision making suggests that maximum career development of all individuals requires each individual to have the opportunity to be exposed to the widest array of learning experiences, regardless of race, gender or ethnic origin" (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, pp. 167-168).

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) was created to develop constructs and concepts to bridge differences and incomplete conceptualizations in existing theory. This theory was derived from Bandura's (1986) revised social cognitive career theory, Hackett and Betz's (1981) self-efficacy theory, and Krumboltz's (1979) learning theory. To update these theoretical formulations, the SCCT developers acknowledged the importance of learning experiences and the influence of genetic factors and environmental conditions on career decisions. Patton and McMahon (1999) stated:

> SCCT focuses more on the specific cognitive mediators that influence learning experiences in career decision-making behavior. . . . The theory focuses on how personal and environmental factors influence career decisions and . . . SCCT emphasizes that the individual is an active agent in these processes. (p. 62)

According to Patton and McMahon (1999), SCCT has three interlocking segmental processes: how career and academic interests develop, how career choices are made and enacted, and how performance outcomes are achieved. Lent, S. D. Brown, and Hackett (1994) described how three intricately related social cognitive variables (self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) interact with an individual's traits, such as gender and ethnicity, relevant environment issues, and learning experiences. The individual is central to these three interlocking processes.

Fitzgerald, Fassinger, and Betz (1995) outlined ways in which SCCT can contribute to the career psychology of women: the importance of deliberately including a focus on contextual factors that are important for understanding the career development of women, people of color, working-class people, and others for whom existing frameworks offer less-than-satisfactory explanation (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

The individual is central to all theories, yet this concept has been dealt with differently. For example, some theories emphasize the importance of particular individual traits, such as values, personality, or interests, and much attention has been focused on the concept of self as an organizing concept. The major theories have used a number of terms to discuss the individual, such as self (Bordin, 1990; Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990), self-concept (Gottfredson, 1981; Super, 1953, 1957, 1990), vocational identity (Holland, 1985), and self-observation generalization (Mitchell & Kumboltz, 1990).

There are also career development models that relate specifically to influences in women's career choice and development. Some examples are Nieva and Guteck (1981), Astin (1984), and Betz and Fitzgerald (1987).

In varying ways commencing with Super (1957), much research has acknowledged a broad array of environmental influences in women's career choice and development. Nieva and Guteck (1981) distinguished between women's career preferences and their ultimate jobs, stressing that, although personality accounts for preferences, many demographic and economic variables account for the latter. This integration of individual and environmental influences in explaining career behavior was developed further in two theoretical models, Gottfredson (1981), as previously discussed, and Astin (1984).

Astin (1984) proposed a comprehensive theory to explain the career development of women and men. She believed her sociopsychological model could explain the occupational behavior of women and men, maintaining that "work motivation is the same for men and women, but they make different choices because their early socialization experiences and structural opportunities are different" (p. 118).

Astin's (1984) model incorporates four major constructs: motivation, work expectations, sex-role socialization, and the structure of opportunity. She proposed that an individual's motivation for work behavior is related to the need for survival and pleasure and the desire to make a societal contribution. Career choices are therefore related to accessibility of various occupations and the individual's expectation that these three needs will be met.

In their major review of the career psychology of women, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) identified four independent variables and five dependent variables that influence women's career choice (see Figure 2). These authors believed theoretical models needed to focus specifically on women's issues so as not to neglect any important variables.

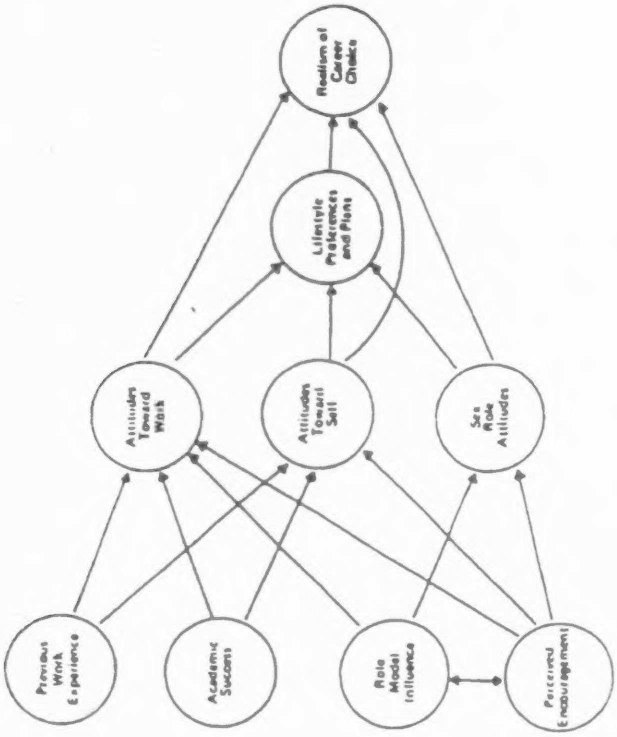
Realism of Career Choice
Lifestyle Preferences and Plans
Attitudes Toward Work
Attitudes Toward Self
Sex Role Attitudes
Previous Work Experience
Academic Success
Role Model Influence
Perceived Encouragement

Figure 2. Career development framework (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987, p. 144).

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Summary

This review of the literature related to career development has shown the breadth of the career development field. Lent and Hackett (1994) commented that "any truly comprehensive approach to career development should account for the complex connections between the person and his or her context, between intrapsychic and interpersonal mechanisms, and between volitional and nonvolitional influences on the career development process" (p. 78).

The major career development theories and their respective concepts have been identified and discussed from the perspectives of content and process and how these frameworks relate to and influence women's career choice. Since the days of Parsons (1909) and his concept of "true reasoning," career development, career choice, and career decision making have been portrayed as rational, logical processes based on objective information. However, more recent theorists are drawing attention to influences other than logical thought processes that influence career development, choice, and decision making. Lent and Hackett (1994) posited that "people's career trajectories are not just the result of their cognitive activity" (p. 77). They cited emotional reactions, achievement histories, social and economic conditions, culture, gender, genetic endowment, social context, and unexpected life events as influences that "may interact with or supersede the effects of career-related cognitions" (p. 78).

The review of the literature also identified the individual and his or her ability to understand himself or herself as a recurring theme in the career theory literature—that is, the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity of individuals whose career behavior the theories are attempting to explain and predict. Fitzgerald, Fassinger, and Betts (1995) noted that "as we go into our separateness, our individuality, into that which makes us different, we will learn more about our commonalities as well" (p. 102). The literature revealed that women's career choices and decision making are influenced in various ways.

Women in Leadership Roles

Mankind has had a longstanding infatuation with what contributes to the success or failure of individuals in leadership roles. Historians have reviewed the behaviors of Mongolian khans, Egyptian emperors, Roman caesars, and European kings, critiquing the successes and failures of such individuals. Leadership qualities are noted in the early writings of the Greeks, and leadership qualities, such as justice, wisdom, counsel, and valor, were noted in the heroes of Homer's *Iliad.* Leadership is a universal phenomenon and extends throughout the realms of life, from parenthood, to military experience, to organizational experience.

History and research demonstrate women's capacity to function effectively in high leadership positions. In a portrait documenting the achievements of seven notable women leaders in American history, Nies (1977) illustrated the characteristics of female leadership by portraying Sarah Moore Grimke's commitment to values and beliefs, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's charismatic and persuasive political success, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's visionary mind, and Harriet Tubman's strength in venturing into ongoing risks to pursue aspirations for her people. Twentieth-century examples of successful women in leadership can be seen through the motivation of Eleanor Roosevelt, the power and influence of Margaret Thatcher, and the sensitivity and commitment of Mother Theresa.

Although the research demonstrates women's capacity to function effectively in higher leadership positions, the literature reveals a paucity of women in senior leadership positions and gives three principal reasons for the absence of women in formal leadership roles. Gender-related differences between male and female leaders are also discussed.

One of the three principle reasons identified in the research for the absence of women in formal leadership roles is that women lack attributes necessary to be leaders (Haslett, Geis, & Carter, 1992). A second commonly cited reason is that women have not been socialized for positions of authority and influence (Rosener, 1995). The third rationale argues that organizational barriers inhibit women from advancing to senior leadership positions (Kanter, 1993).

Haslett and colleagues (1992) reported that traditionally women were not thought to possess the necessary leadership attributes. Women were believed to be compliant, submissive, emotional, and poor decision makers. To advance their careers, women were encouraged to imitate men's style of hierarchical leadership and to learn management skills that established clear lines of authority (Cannie, 1979; Harragan, 1977; Henning & Jardim, 1977). Paul, Sweet, and Brigham (1980) suggested that women examine the characteristics of males in top-status positions. If the path to the top is through a deanship, then the unique characteristics of male deans and presidents deserve attention and perhaps imitation by females who aspire to such positions. Recommendations to women are that they should not be themselves and that they should assume male behaviors in order to acquire leadership positions (Caplan, 1994). These types of recommendations lead women to experience a loss of identity, suggest sex blindness (Caplan, 1994), and promote gender discrimination (Wilson, 1995). These suggestions further support the notion that women should not be in leadership positions. Recent studies of gender differences related to personality traits and effective leadership do not support the traditional view that female equals difference equals deficient (Desjardins, 1989; Gilligan, 1982; Tannen, 1994). These studies, however, have not had a major impact on increasing the number of women in senior leadership positions.

A second rationale for the lack of women in management positions is found in the argument that women have not been socialized into assuming positions of authority and power and that societal stereotyping obscures women's potential as leaders (Wilson, 1995). The masculine stereotype, with its attributes of intelligence, dominance, rationality, and objectivity, implies competence, status, and authority. The feminine stereotype of emotionality, nurturance, accommodation, conformity, and deference, implies lesser competence, lower status, and no authority (Haslett et al., 1992). Although the notion of meritocracy is prevalent in higher education, perceptions, attitudes, and actions are still influenced, consciously or subconsciously, by traditional gender stereotypes (Wilson, 1995). Powell (1993) noted that the stereotype of the "good manager" as masculine has remained unchanged in America and women managers may have adopted a masculine style as a way of becoming a good manager. Kempner (1991) used the concept of "culture of professionalism," which includes socialization patterns, to investigate who chooses to enter educational administration. He found the "webs of significance that compose this culture are predominantly male oriented, based upon conceptions of control and authority drawn from the metaphors of business, the military, and athletics" (p. 119). Kempner surmised that individuals, most often women and minorities, who do not have these characteristics are less likely to succeed in securing administrative positions.

Those women who have succeeded in gaining positions of influence are often viewed as extraordinary performers, as exceptions to the rule (Pearson et al., 1989). The *super woman* explanation of success implies that women are responsible for their own lack of representativeness in leadership positions and that they need only to resocialize to fit into the male world (Shakeshaft, 1989). In this perspective, women must adapt to the norms rather than the norms changing to accommodate women.

A third argument explaining the lack of women in administrative positions focuses on organizational structures and the barriers or glass ceilings that keep women from attaining top leadership positions. Organizations often segment opportunity structures and job markets in ways that enable men to achieve positions of power and prestige more easily than women, reinforcing male-oriented value systems (Acker, 1990; Blackmore, 1989; Ferguson, 1984; Loden, 1985). In a 1992 study of women community college administrators in California, participants "overwhelmingly mentioned male attitudes and the presence of a 'good old boys network'" as factors inhibiting women's advancement in administration (Faulconer, 1995, p. 15). Kanter (1993) argued that women in large organizations are disadvantaged as a consequence of their structural placement, crowed in dead-end jobs at the bottom or exposed as tokens at the top, and that gender differences are due to structure rather than to characteristics of women and men as individuals. Ferguson (1984) viewed women's absence in leadership positions as a consequence of their discomfort in hierarchical structures. The emphasis on structural barriers reemphasizes the idea of women as victims, unlike the psychological and social psychological explanations, and focuses on institutional construction of policies and practices that hinder women's advancement. Because women have less access to organizational power through sex segregation of occupations and gender-biased perceptions, women are faced with paradoxical demands. They are expected to behave in gender-inappropriate ways to fit the male model of leadership, yet these same behaviors are negatively evaluated when practiced by women, which creates a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" dilemma (Haslett et al., 1992, p. 100).

During the 1990s there has been an increase in studies of women in leadership roles in higher education and business (Adams, 1995; Astin & Leland, 1991; Baker, 1996; Blackmore, 1991; Harnett, 1994; Haslett et al., 1992; Helgesen, 1990). Much of this work has indicated women manage differently than men do, discounting previous genderless studies that generalized findings from male subjects to all persons. Investigations focusing on gender differences suggest ways management theory can be modified to become more effective and more reflective of women's realities as leaders (Chliwniak, 1996; Desjardins, 1994; Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Gillett-Karam, 1989; Rosener, 1995).

Literature on female leadership at the onset of the women's movement advised women to behave in a way that mimicked successful men in leadership roles (Harragan, 1977; Henning & Jardim, 1977). These texts described ways for women to be accommodating and successful in the business world according to the existing male culture. Feuers (1981) advised women administrators in education to "match . . . the 'old boys' network" (p. 11). Breyer and Zalupski (1981) encouraged women to "adopt male values and motivations" (p. 7). Navy Admiral Frances T. Shea was quoted as advising women to survive in ways that "assume unidentified fish as sharks. . . ," "counter . . . aggression promptly," and "use anticipatory retaliation" (Rist, 1984, p. 25). Shea's suggestions denote a need for women to emulate men's leadership tactics that are effective in the world of combat.

Gender Issues and Leadership

Kohlberg (1981) and Gilligan (1982) are recognized for their research of men's and women's moral development, respectively. In studying male subjects, Kohlberg developed a theory of human moral development based on moral principles of justice and fairness, or the justice/rights mode that stresses objectivity. In contrast, Gilligan studied women subjects who were found to value not justice, rights, and fairness but attachment and affiliation, or the care/connected mode. Kohlberg's and Gilligan's research denotes two distinct orientations used to study gender-related differences in male and female leaders.

Using interviewing as the primary foundation for research, Rosener (1990) revealed that women are more likely to be transformational leaders, whereas men are more likely to be transactional leaders. Epstein (1991) challenged Rosener's study, which lacked direct observation of participants, contending that men and women engage in their own form of self-stereotyping according to socialized views. To accent the attitude of an x-gender approach to leadership effectiveness, Epstein explored the ways in which men and women lead. According to Epstein, the importance lies not in how each one or the other of the sexes leads, only how people lead. Gillett-Karam's (1988) study of effective community college presidents indirectly supports Epstein's view. Gillett-Karam noted that the concept of vision (characterized in transformational leadership theory) was the most important leadership concept mentioned by both male and female leaders. In later studies, however, Gillett-Karam (1994) demonstrated more traditional differences between female and male college presidents.

Rizzo and Mendez (1990) proposed a framework for integrating change into a diverse society. Leaders can foster cultural integration and promote positive institutional change by (a) endorsing individual work and diagnosing individual needs, (b) knowing the importance of reward systems, (c) fostering a climate of commitment, (d) reinforcing the importance of trust, (e) recognizing the significance of creative conflict, and (f) focusing on free and open communication. Rizzo and Mendez's framework is congruent with the work of other scholars who advocate integrating gender-specific attributes in the organizational environment.

Roueche and colleagues (1989) contributed meaningful insight to recognizing a holistic blend of traits, behaviors, and situations that address the researchers' objective to recognize and study transformational leadership within community colleges. The scholars identified exemplary transformational leaders as “those leaders who are able to envision and nurture change toward access and excellence” as well as “those who communicate directly and powerfully and empower followers to live the dream and make it reality" (p. 48). This study projects a message of an x-gender-type leadership. Griffin (1995), in her description of the above quote, stated:

> The words "nurture" and "dream" and "empower" used in an androgynous manner invoke an implication that both men and women relinquish gender-specific definitions of leadership behavior and adopt a new transformation of "vision" that presents a kind of mystified motivation within the organization." (p. 34)

She further stated, "When this stimulation occurs, followers seem to be inspired to strive toward accomplishing difficult goals" (p. 35). An interesting aspect of the Roueche study was that only 10% of those community college presidents recognized for having a transformational leadership style involving "nurturing" and "empowerment" were women.

From the Roueche and colleagues' (1989) study, Gillett-Karam identified items, such as vision, influence, people, and values, associated with women. Items identified with men were acting positively and rewarding others. Items statistically identified with women were risk-taking, acting collaboratively, and caring or respecting others. Overall, Gillett-Karam's study reflects more of an inclusive style of leadership effectiveness, with gender differences being fewer than gender likenesses.

Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990) implied that, in the future, women may hold a slight advantage over men in effective leadership style. Although women do not have to "'unlearn' old authoritarian behavior" . . . "like male colleagues [do], they must learn to coach, inspire, and gain people's commitment" (p. 230).

Communication and Gender Issues

Studies of the differences in men's and women's verbal and nonverbal language have found that, in spoken language, women use different words than men do. Women are more likely to use expressive language and more affiliation words and intensifiers, such as "so," "such," "adorable," and "lovely." Women also tend to pose questions more frequently than do men (Kahn, 1984; Thorne & Henley, 1975).

In studies of communication in leadership, Nelton (1991) reported women managers were more open in their communication, more likely to encourage participation in others, more caring than males, and more likely to value consensus-building in decision-making incidents. Shakeshaft (1987) noted evidence of this through women administrators' frequent interaction with others, in time spent communicating, and in the amount of information that women shared with others. Gillett-Karam (1988) found a difference between men and women community college presidents in the domain of caring and respect for others. With respect to power and influence, Kishi (1992) noted women leaders tended to state their expectations more often and disclose more information than men did, and male leaders used reasoning to a greater degree than did women.

In a more recent study, Tannen (1994) maintained there are no inherent or immutable gender differences, nor a single pattern of communication for all men or all women. Regarding conversational styles, Tannen did note that, within the organization, she heard men saying "I" and women saying "we"; men focusing on status and women focusing on connection; and men engaging confrontation and women preferring consensus.

Scholars maintain that knowledge of the sex differences in communication can strengthen the understanding of men's and women's roles in social organizations. This knowledge can also help men and women establish effective leadership styles. Understanding alternative frames of reference strengthens the knowledge of institutions' culture and is essential for organizational effectiveness and individual satisfaction (Schein, 1985).

As pointed out in the literature, the paucity of women in leadership roles has been attributed to a number of factors, including gender-related differences in leadership styles. A review of the literature also revealed a variety of leadership theories.

Leadership Theory

Culminating the consensus of developing theory as it exists currently provides a means for conceptualizing and understanding the phenomena which one intends to explore (Krathwohl, 1993). Leadership theory, like the community college, unfolds a transformation of concepts spanning several decades. The following narrative presents a sequential unfolding of four general theories of leadership: feminist, trait, presidential, and connective. These theories unveil systematic research that has attempted to understand leadership in its transpiring manner and that places leadership in a more reliable and valid context.

Feminist Theory of Leadership

Gilligan (1982) asserted that women's development is different from men's. According to Gilligan, women tend to use intuition, and they are relationship oriented; men maintain a more objective, analytical mode of functioning. According to Gilligan's now-famous theory, women are care oriented, whereas men are justice-rights oriented in their moral development. Drawing from Gilligan's findings, literature in the 1980s and early 1990s presented a point of view directed at women recognizing and creating their own leadership style.

Hart (1980) advocated the importance of a female leader being truthful and of a woman exhibiting congruency between her truth and her behavior. Loden (1985) explained feminine leadership style as a holistic approach to management. According to Loden, feminine leadership style emphasizes not only rational functioning within the organization but also maintaining close relationships between leaders and followers.

The literature of the 1990s recognizes the attributes that women bring to leadership positions. After following and observing five women in corporate leadership positions, Helgesen (1990) concluded that women demonstrate both similar and dissimilar patterns of leadership, as compared to Mintzberg's (1968) intense study of male corporate leaders. Helgesen concluded the following:

1. The women worked at a steady pace but scheduled in small breaks throughout the day.
2. The women did not view unscheduled tasks and encounters as interruptions.
3. The women made time for activities not directly related to their work.

4. The women preferred live action encounters but scheduled time to attend to mail.

5. They maintained a complex network of relationships with people outside their organizations.

6. They focused on ecology of leadership. (pp. 19-25).

Unlike the men in Mintzberg's study, Helgesen (1990) identified characteristics, such as caring, involved, helping, and responsible as concerns of women leaders. These women did not view interruptions negatively but, rather, considered them a part of the normal expectations of the work environment (Griffin, 1995). Item three was specified as somewhat different, in that, although women worked long and tedious hours as did Mintzberg's men, the women leaders allowed family and personal life to assume a place of priority in their busy schedule (Helgesen, 1990). Another important difference Helgesen noted was related to item six. Whereas the men in Mintzberg's study became engulfed in daily managerial tasks, Helgesen noted that the women executives seemed to focus regularly on long-term purposes and viewed their organization holistically (Griffin, 1995).

An important note, however, is to recognize the difference in time period between Mintzberg's study and Helgesen's. Each study reflects the time period in which the study was conducted. As discussed earlier, leadership philosophies transform throughout history to meet the society's changing needs. Helgesen acknowledged the impact of the time periods on each study, writing that "some of the divergences between my findings and Mintzberg's reflect the different decades in which our studies were done more than any differences in how men and women manage" (p. 19).

Both Mintzberg's and Helgesen's studies help create an avenue for deeper insight into and understanding of men and women in leadership. Writers and scholars recognize the need for women to develop an effective personalized style for them and their situations and that will contribute to a diverse institutional culture needed for the present and future global society (Cohen & Brawer 1982; Rizzo & Mendez, 1990; Rosener, 1990). Rizzo and Mendez stressed the importance of integrating the influences of both genders into the diverse society of the 1990s, and, according to these authors, integration is best achieved when women and men alike exhibit their own appropriate leadership behaviors that meet the uniqueness of each organization's culture.

Trait Theory of Leadership

The trait approach to leadership assumes that some people have traits and skills that will make them more likely to seek and attain positions of leadership and to be effective in these positions. Trait theorists attempted to identify effective leaders based on their personal characteristics, attributes and skills. Early trait leadership studies identify significant factors such as height, build and attractiveness (Bass, 1990). Stogdill (1974), in examining the findings from studies conducted on trait theory spanning the first six decades of the 20th century, concluded that leaders were characteristically intelligent, persistent, self-confident, dependable and responsible in both work and social aspects of their lives.

Yukl (1994) exemplified trait theory by identifying the traits and skills of successful leaders (Table 1). A criticism of trait theorists is their failure to address the significance of situations in leader effectiveness. Stogdill concluded that "A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits . . . the pattern of personal characteristics, activities, and goals of the followers" (as cited in Yukl, 1994, p. 255). Furthermore, the concept implied by trait theory, that leaders are born and not made, presents a rather dismal picture for the would-be leader devoid of the identified traits but earnestly desiring to train and educate for the acquisition of effective leadership style (Hampton, Webber, & Summer, 1987).

Scholars contend a deeper examination of trait theory characteristics reveals that none of the traits included in Stogdill's research correlates very highly with effective leadership style when considered alone. Rather, certain traits correlated more highly with certain situations (Bass, 1990).

According to Yukl (1994), the trait approach has important implications for improving leadership effectiveness. Yukl (1994) asserted that "information about a person's traits and skills is essential for selecting people to fill leadership positions, for identifying training needs for the current job, and for planning leadership development activities to prepare for promotion to higher-level positions" (p. 280).

Table 1

Traits and Skills of Successful Leaders

Traits	Skills
Adaptable to situation	Clever
Alert to social environment	Conceptually skilled
Ambitious and achievement-oriented	Creative
Assertive	Diplomatic and tactful
Cooperative	Fluent in speaking
Decisive	Knowledgeable about group task
Dependable	Organized
Dominant	Persuasive
Energetic	Socially skilled
Persistent	
Self-confident	
Tolerant of stress	
Willing to assume responsibility	

Note. From Yukl, 1994, p. 256.

Presidential Leadership Theory

The literature addressing leadership and higher education has focused predominately on an examination of roles, traits, leader–follower relationships, and the context within which leaders work. Furthermore, much of the leadership research focuses on a particular aspect of leadership. Authors have argued for leadership research that is expansive enough to include a number of intervening variables and leadership components (Chaffee, 1989; Yukl, 1989). The Institutional Leadership Project, a 5-year longitudinal study by the National Center for Postsecondary Governance and Finance that examined individuals in formal leadership positions, is one of the first major studies to incorporate multiple leadership elements and to investigate how people behave, interact, and change as leaders. Primarily, this project analyzed how leaders view their organizations, think about their actions, and describe their leadership theories (Bensimon, 1989; Birnbaum, 1989; Neumann, 1989) and examined how cognitive process influence individuals in their leadership roles.

Thirty-two colleges and universities were selected to participate in the Institutional Leadership Project. The study's participants were (a) eight universities, (b) eight public colleges, (c) eight private colleges, and (d) eight community colleges. Semi-structured interviews were conducted during a 3-day campus visit with faculty, union presidents, trustees, administrators, student leaders, and presidents. (Bensimon, 1989; Birnbaum, 1989; Neumann, 1989). Because each researcher examined different aspects of leadership and used distinct theoretical perspectives to guide his or her data analysis, different conclusions emerged.

Birnbaum (1989), after reviewing organizational leadership literature, categorized research findings into five groups: (a) trait theories that focused on specific individual characteristics, (b) power and influence theories that examined the source and amount of power available to individuals and how they used that power with others, (c) behavioral theories that investigated how leaders behave, (d) contingency theories that focused on situational factors, and (e) symbolic theories that studied interpretations of social attributes. With these five types of leadership theories in mind, Birnbaum initiated a study to examine which leadership theories presidents would utilize as they described leadership. He proposed that the theories formulated from presidents' definitions of leadership may influence how they delineate their roles and how they ascribe meaning to daily events. The data from the study consisted of presidents' responses to the question: "What does the word 'leadership' mean to you?" (Birnbaum, 1989 p. 127).

Birnbaum (1989) found that only 25% of the presidents included in their definitions elements of trait theory, and even fewer spoke in terms that could be associated with contingency and symbolic theories. On the other hand, 97% of the presidents' responses included aspects of behavior theories in their definitions, and 88% described leadership from a power and influence theoretical perspective. Birnbaum cautioned readers against making firm conclusions and generalizations because of the small size of the sample. Given this reminder, he suggested that observed differences among types of institutions were minimal. Additionally, no differences were found between newly appointed and experienced presidents. New presidents were defined as individuals in their position less than 3 years, and experienced presidents were defined as individuals in their position for more than 5 years.

Because a high percentage of presidents included aspects of behavior and power and influence theories in their definitions, Birnbaum provided further clarification on how presidents defined these leadership approaches. Concerning presidents' views on behavior approaches, the majority of the presidents mentioned the importance of communicating goals and motivating individuals. Birnbaum (1989) stated that 78% of the presidents "defined leadership as directing the activities of others toward the achievement of specified goals or objectives" (p. 132). Almost half the presidents preferred institutional goals to be leader-directed rather than mission-oriented or follower-directed.

Presidents' preferences for leader-directed institutional goals coincided with the social power orientation emphasized in the power and influence theories. Within power and influence theories, the two conceptual orientations are social power and social exchange. The difference between social power and social exchange is that the former is based on a one-way process of influence rather than a two-way process characteristic of the latter (Birnbaum, 1989). The study revealed that the majority of the presidents perceived leadership to be a one-way process, with the goal to persuade individuals to follow their orders. The findings indicated that most of the presidents defined leadership as a process that emphasized behavioral roles, social power, and directive influence; that is, a traditional leadership orientation.

Connective Leadership

To address the numerous leadership difficulties presented by a globally dependent society, higher education leaders are being challenged to question their basic assumptions about how the world works and, in particular, what is effective leadership. Our understanding of leadership is shifting from a conventional model that encourages an individualistic focus to a relational model characterized as collaborative and empowering (Komives, 1994). The themes of collaboration, empowerment, and shared decision-making strongly convey the significance of the emerging leadership revolution. This leadership transformation represents a momentous shift in the way we have traditionally described and perceived effective leadership.

This emerging viewpoint challenging traditional notions of leadership is not recent. Nearly two decades ago, there were signs that the use of conventional leadership models was being questioned. According to Schwartz and Ogilvy (1979), the shift from a rational and mechanical perspective to a contextual and relational viewpoint emerges from the way we explore and make sense of our changing world. Instead of viewing organizations as linear and orderly bureaucratic entities, we are now beginning to describe organizations as fluid and dynamic. Wheatly (1992) submitted that organizations are believed to be systems without boundaries that are constantly learning and self-correcting or self-renewing.

The connective leadership model is unique from other leadership models because of its adoption of a broad and diverse spectrum of behavioral strategies. Within the model are action strategies that depict concepts in both the traditional and the emerging leadership paradigms. According to Lipman-Blumen (in press), a subtle but powerful difference between connective leadership and other forms of leadership is the belief in the power of shared leadership, the value of empowering rather than controlling others, and the importance of building partnerships. Essentially, connective leadership "not only encompasses both transactional and transformational behaviors, but also stretches its practitioners beyond individualism and charisma, even beyond competition and collaboration" (Lipman-Blumen, 1992, p. 184).

The importance of relationships, cooperation, and involvement within the connective leadership model affirms and parallels similar revolutionary changes occurring in other fields of study, such as biology, physics, and economics (Kuh, Whitt, & Shedd, 1987; Rogers, 1988; Wheatly, 1992). Essentially, the world view that has traditionally placed masculine-oriented values above feminine-oriented ones is being replaced by a world view that recognizes the worth and value of both feminine and masculine leadership. This significant paradigm shift ultimately changes how feminine leadership is perceived and accepted within organizational behavior.

Several authors have proposed that the current focus on interactive and relationship-oriented leadership styles acknowledges the long unrecognized merits of feminine leadership (Guido-DiBrito, 1994; Lipman-Bluman, in press; Rogers, 1988). The integration of feminine-oriented values into the emerging leadership paradigm validates not only the worth of feminine leadership but also changes how leadership is evaluated and perceived by others. "Thus success in leadership no longer requires women to act like men, but rather to implement and integrate female ethos values into the practice of leadership.

Summary

Four theoretical interpretations of leadership have been identified and described in the context of women's leadership in higher education administration. The leadership theories were feminist, trait, presidential, and connective. The major concepts of these frameworks and the theoretical influence on the role of women in leadership have been presented.

Bass (1990) acknowledged the importance of leadership theory to be always transforming. As people and times change, leadership theory must be reoriented. As more women access leadership positions, an understanding of women's approaches to leadership is imperative.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.
—Maya Angelou

The research method for this study was qualitative, therefore the findings are descriptive rather than statistical. The main focus of this study was to identify the factors and circumstances that influenced the decision of three female former community college presidents in a southeastern system to seek the presidency by examining their self-perceptions of their career development experiences. The qualitative research method used was a multiple sociological life history. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), "sociological life histories try to construct subjects' careers by emphasizing the role of organizations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping subjects' evolving definitions of self and their perspectives on life." Although information exists on women in higher education administration, much of that information was gathered through survey methods, which attempt to discover causality or correlation rather than enlarge understanding of the issues these women faced. Because there is a need to augment the body of literature about women in chief administrative roles in the community college system, the multiple life history method helped me discover information that may assist current and aspiring leaders in higher education administration.

The appropriateness of qualitative techniques, particularly life history, is two-fold. First, as G.R. Jones (1983) elaborated, a life history methodology enables an understanding of processes from the perspective of the individual participants ". . . in a way that gives priority to individual explanations of actions rather than to methods that filter and sort responses into predetermined conceptual categories" (p. 147). W. I. Thomas (1923) pointed out that what people believe to be real is real in its consequences. In other words, these former community college presidents participating in this study are acting largely upon the reality of the beliefs they hold about their career development experiences and subsequent academic careers. Thus, discovering these women's self-perceptions elucidated the logic behind their individual actions and their interpretations of their career development and related the cultural story they wished to create. Second, incorporating women's lived experiences into research design yielded hypotheses about the community college presidency and women in that role not previously derived by other methods. As described by Jeanne Paradise in the introduction to a special issue of the *Journal of Education* (1985) dedicated to women and education, the value of women's stories is that they

> . . . reveal women's particular constructions of moral thought and action, descriptions of themselves in relation to others, their ways of coming to know and to describe their learning and education, and their work. . . . Thus [they expand], our understanding of human development and open new possibilities for designing and conducting education. (p. 3)

I employed the life history method to explain the career development experiences of these three female former community college presidents. Using the lived experiences derived from in-depth interviews as a template against which to compare and critique current interpretations yielded undiscovered hypotheses of the effects of race, class, and gender on career development experiences of three female former community college presidents.

Life History Interviewing

Interviews, in general, are extremely valuable in that they reveal the informants' beliefs, values, and attitudes and how these are rhetorically justified (Patton, 1980). In life history interviews, the research data are the accounts of individual lives or specific aspects of these lives. In this study, the data were the career development experiences of the three female former community college presidents in a southeastern state. The goal of life histories, according to Robertson (1983), is to present a sample of the type of life lived by the people studied. She pointed particularly to the usefulness of this method in studying people whose history often becomes invisible. On the other hand, life histories may yield little information about the larger social and historical contexts in which interviewees live and, thus, may have limited applicability to macro-level theory.

The interview questions in this study were designed to elicit the participants' perceptions of their career development experiences prior to assuming the presidency and to identify the factors and circumstances that influenced their decision to seek the community college presidency. The participants were asked to tell about their experiences in four broad areas: (a) educational background and academic aptitude and ability, (b) personal influences, (c) institutional influences, and (d) mentoring influences. I asked open-ended questions to facilitate data collection. Field notes documented other possible sources of data, such as facial expressions, posture, and so forth. Questions based primarily on past experiences were used to eliminate speculation and to ensure greater reliability. The stories were recorded in each participant's own words to present each story as accurately as possible and to capture the essence of the participants' feelings and experiences. According to Etter-Lewis (1993), "[Even though] editing results in a 'neat version of the data and increases readability, it can obscure the distinct style and subtle linguistic features of a narrator's speech" (p. xii).

Participants

The three women who have served as community college presidents in a southeastern community college system were selected for this study. They were the first to have served in this capacity in the system being examined.

Research Design

The interview was used as the inquiry technique because it lends itself appropriately to extension of data through probes and clarifications the researcher initiated. The researcher, as the research instrument, must take what is narrated and make sense of it. I became the narrator of each participant's story. Collaboratively, the participants and I reconstructed their lives as community college presidents.

After receiving approval from the Human Subjects Review Board, a letter and an informed consent form were sent to each participant and three interviews each with each of the 3 participants were scheduled (Appendix A).

Prior to conducting the interviews, I devised a demographic form and a semi-structured interview guide to ascertain similar data from all participants (Appendix B). According to Stake (1995), "the interviewer should arrive with a short list of issue-oriented questions, possibly handing the respondent a copy, indicating there is concern about completing an agenda" (p. 65). I maintained sufficient flexibility to pursue information in whatever direction appeared appropriate as participants began telling their experiences. Participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity. I ascribed pseudonyms to each participant.

Pilot Study

In preparation for this study, I conducted a pilot study with one of the female former community college presidents in a southeastern community college system. Two separate interviews were conducted, using a base list of 40 questions that focused on the former community college president's career path to the presidency, her tenure as president, factors contributing to her success as a community college president, mentoring influences, and professional development. On the basis of the information gathered, I fine-tuned the interview guide that was used to conduct this multiple life history study of the community college presidents in a southeastern community college system (Appendix B).

Data Collection and Analysis

In recent years, higher education research has increasingly focused on women in higher education. However, most of these investigations have been quantitative, documenting the numbers and career patterns of women in academe. Few qualitative studies have examined female leaders' perceptions of themselves, how they organized their lives to become college presidents, and the circumstances or factors they believe allowed them to become community college presidents and that presented challenges to them in attaining the presidency.

My goal in this study was to inform others about how these pioneering female presidents of a southeastern community college system understood and enacted their roles as leaders in higher education. To meet this goal, I conducted semi-structured interviews with these 3 female former community college presidents to find out how these women conceptualized and actualized their pursuit of the presidency.

After data collection was completed, all interviews were transcribed verbatim. I then read the contextualized data several times and scrutinized the data carefully for commonalities and differences. Common threads were identified and coded. The focus was to make sense of another person's life, to understand another person's perspectives, and to hear what was essential. In the narrative process, this technique is commonly called a *closed reading* (Barthes, 1974, p. 13). During this process, I viewed the story through my own lenses to construct meaning according to my prior experience and learning. As narrator of the participants' stories, I in turn documented what I heard and read.

During data analysis, I did not attempt to augment or embellish the participants' stories. According to Van Manen (1990), it is virtually impossible to put everything one knows about an experience aside. Therefore, "we make explicit our understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories. We hold them at bay so as to come to terms with the lived experience" (p. 47). As a result, I, the researcher, was able to listen attentively to each story with an eagerness and excitement for the newness of the participants' stories.

The data collection and analysis format used in this study is presented in Table 1. All interviews were conducted in the participant's office and were audiotaped, with the exception of one telephone interview with former president two. I interviewed former president one on 1/5/00, 1/12/00, and 1/14/00. Former president two was interviewed in her office on 1/13/00 and 2/15/00, and the third interview was conducted by phone with her on 1/31/00. I interviewed former president three on 1/13/00 and 3/2/00 for this study, and I had previously interviewed her on 11/9/97 for the pilot study.

Table 1

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection	Data Analysis
Interview 3 participants –Use Semi-Structured Interview Guide. Probe when needed.	Take field notes. Expand data (constant comparison technique) –Read, reread, reflect, read, and reflect.
Transcribe data	Read/re-read transcriptions –Reflect/make meaning of the stories. –Denote themes/interpret/retell.
Select stories to present as data.	Reflect/retell/reflect –Interpret/analyze/reflect to determine the essence of the stories. –Craft a text of the whole.

Note. Adapted from Kelchterman, 1993.

After the stories were told, detailed, thick descriptions of experiences emerged free of predetermined constraints or outcomes. Data analysis focused on coding and identifying individual and collective themes for the stories. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. I then analyzed the stories for a contextualized interpretation. Smith (1992) resolved that retelling is a social characteristic of narration.

Some contemporary researchers have described narratives or stories as one way of making sense of lived experiences (Bruner, 1986, 1994; Giddings, 1984; hooks, 1992; Polkinghorne, 1988, 1995). Stories allow the storyteller an opportunity to reflect on specific moments in time. Grumet (1988) suggested, after reading Joan Didion's essay "Keeping a Notebook," that the narrative fills the space between "what happened" and "what it means" (as cited in Kramp, 1995, p. 8). "As in any social transaction, each party must be individually motivated to participate in it. Each party must have some interest in telling or listening to that narrative" (p. 7). Bruner (1987) stated that "life narratives obviously reflect the prevailing theories about possible lives that are a part of one's culture" (p. 7). Heilbrun (1988) concluded that narratives allow women to assume power over their lives:

> We can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard. We live our lives through texts. They may be read or chanted, or experienced electronically, or come to us, like the murmurings of our mothers, telling us what conventions demand. Whatever their former medium, these stories have formed us all, they are what we must use to make new fictions, new narratives. (p. 37)

Polanyi (1966) determined that when we read and interpret stories "we can know more than we can tell" (p. 4). After reading the transcripts from my pilot study, I realized that I had collected more potential data than I could portray in the study. After data collection was concluded for this dissertation, I realized that again I had more data than could be portrayed in this study.

As researcher, I brought a reflective awareness to the events experienced. I merged my perspectives with those of the storyteller to gain new insight into the essence of the experiences. In fact, I anticipated a new understanding of what these women experienced as former community college presidents and as a new way of viewing the data. This process was ongoing. Van Manen (1990) stated that a complete reduction of a phenomenon is almost impossible—that full or final interpretive descriptions are unattainable. Therefore, he continued, "the initial point for interpretation and analysis is where we find the phenomena [where they are naturally engaged]" (p. 20). I made no attempt, however, either to evaluate the tenures of these former presidents or to document their stories beyond their own version of events.

Researcher's Role

Particularly in qualitative research, the researcher's role as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions, and biases at the study's outset. My perceptions of higher education and the community college presidency have been shaped by my personal experiences. Currently, I serve as a college administrator at a southeastern community college. As a senior administrator, I have been involved with all top administrative activities and decisions, and I have worked closely with faculty, directors, deans, vice-presidents, and the president. This understanding of the context and role of the president enhanced my awareness and knowledge of and sensitivity to many of the challenges, decisions, and issues encountered in the community college environment and assisted me in working with this study's informants. I brought knowledge of both the structure of higher education and the role of the female community college administrator. Particular attention was paid to the role of the female community college president and to the female presidents' reflections on their former presidencies.

Because I conducted a pilot study with one of the female former community college presidents, I brought expert knowledge to this study. Every effort was made to ensure objectivity, and I began this study with the perspective that the community college presidency is a diverse and often difficult position.

Ethical Considerations

Most authors address the importance of ethical considerations when discussing qualitative research design (Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988; Spradley, 1979). First and foremost, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant(s). I employed the following safeguards to protect the informant's rights: (a) the research objectives were articulated verbally and in writing so that the informants understood them clearly (including a description of how the data would be used), (b) the informants gave me written permission to proceed with the study as articulated, (c) a research exemption form was filed with the Institutional Review Board, (d) all data collection devices and activities were explained fully to the informants, (e) the informants' rights, interests, and wishes were considered first when choices were made regarding data reporting, and (f) the final decision regarding informant anonymity rested with the informant.

Validity and Reliability

Qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they interact (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Coles (as cited in Glesne & Peshkin, 1988) stated that

> the people who come to see us bring us their stories. They hope they tell them well enough so that we understand the truth of their lives. They hope we know how to interpret their stories correctly. We have to remember that what we hear is their story. (p. 7)

According to Goetz and LeCompte (as cited in Eisenhart & Howe, 1992), qualitative studies should not be evaluated using the conventional method of validity and reliability so well suited to qualitative studies. They wrote:

> Establishing validity requires (1) determining the extent to which conclusions effectively represent empirical reality and (2) assessing whether constructs devised by researchers represent or measure the categories of human experience that occur. . . . Internal validity refers to the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations of some reality; external validity refers to the degree to which such representations can be compared legitimately across groups. (p. 647)

The mirror is the perfect token of qualitative researchers, for they seek above all to reflect genuinely the lives of their subjects. Internal validity is concerned with how well the researcher is able to discern reality. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), qualitative studies in general are considered more credible, because they present an authentic representation of the phenomenon under study by admitting the subjective experiences of the participants and the researcher into the ongoing process of research. The participants and researcher must share a common understanding of the words used to describe reality. The primary way this study sought to address internal validity was through the use of (a) an empirically generated categorization, (b) triangulation, (c) memo writing, (d) pilot study, and (e) trustworthiness.

Categorization in qualitative research, according to LeCompte and Preissle (1993), requires the researcher to describe what he or she observes and to divide observed phenomena into units. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) explained further that the researcher should first look for categories to emerge from the data that occur most frequently; secondly indicate how units are like and unlike each other, and finally, determine which of the described items are associated with each other and thus may be aggregated into groups.

According to Glaser and Strauss (as cited in LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), triangulation "prevents the investigator from accepting too readily the validity of initial impressions, it enhances the scope, density, and clarity of constructs developed during the course of the investigation" (p. 48). Glaser and Strauss further stated that triangulation assists in correcting biases that occur when the researcher is the only observer of the phenomenon under investigation. Denzin (1978) suggested four different modes of triangulation exist. In this study, the most applicable modes were print sources and data sources. Newspaper articles and minutes from boards of trustees meetings served as the print sources, and the data sources were the three participants I interviewed.

I used portions of verbatim transcripts from interviews to support any categories or themes that developed. The presentation of the actual words used by participants allows this study's readers to make judgments for themselves.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated that memo writing "frees your mind for new thoughts and perspectives . . . [and] you develop your thoughts . . . you begin the analysis process" (p. 128). I believed it was particularly important to capture these analytic thoughts when they occurred, for they were links across the data that found their way into analytic files.

The purpose of the pilot study, according to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), is to learn about the research process, interview schedule, observation techniques, and oneself. I conducted a pilot study, as previously described in this dissertation.

Lincoln and Guba suggested there are four types of trustworthiness: (a) truth value, (b) applicability, (c) consistency, and (d) neutrality (as cited in Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). According to Lincoln and Guba, "truth value refers to the accuracy of the findings for those being studied. Applicability refers to the likelihood that the findings will pertain to other groups in other situations" (p. 651).

By allowing the participants in this study to respond to open-ended questions in a semi-structured format, the participants took the lead and reflected at will what they considered important. Therefore, truth was subject oriented, not researcher defined. During the interview stage, I posed questions to help clarify each participant's viewpoints and to ensure my understanding of what was said.

With regard to applicability, or the generalizability of findings to other populations, Lincoln and Guba argue that

> the establishment of external validity is an empirical matter and must be determined by those who wish to apply the findings somewhere else. Potential audiences for research findings must themselves determine whether the context in which they are interested is sufficiently similar to the context from which research findings derive to make their transfer possible and reasonable. (as cited in Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p. 651)

No phenomenon can be understood outside the time and context in which it developed. Therefore, in this study, the burden of applying the findings from these former presidents' life histories to another context lies with the reader.

The other two kinds of trustworthiness Lincoln and Guba suggested are consistency (reliability) and neutrality (objectivity) (as cited in Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). The quantitative conceptualization of reliability assumes that the findings can be replicated over time by different researchers. Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that qualitative methods are not designed to assure replicability, because replicability assumes a static, fixed truth or set of facts not influenced by time or contexts. Qualitative researchers do, however, conceive of reliability as a case, a study, a finding, et cetera, which is accurate.

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) defined external reliability as the likelihood that individual researchers would discover the same phenomenon, generate the same constructs, or both. I ensured such external reliability by meeting the following criteria specified by Goetz and LeCompte. These criteria included

1. careful description of respondents and verbatim accounts or interviews;
2. identification of the researcher and her role in relationship to the respondents;
3. delineation of all pertinent contexts to the interview;
4. careful recording of data collection stages;
5. explicitness regarding assumptions and theories underlying the study and how these change over time; and
6. researcher self-reflexivity.

Internal reliability, as defined by Goetz and LeCompte (1984), refers to the degree to which other researchers, given access to the identical data and constructs, would match data with constructs or categories in the same or similar manner. Though qualitative data analysis is a highly subjective process, internal consistency can be checked through "interrater reliability," which Lauer and Asher (1988) defined as "the amount of correlation between two or more raters or coders" (p. 138). However, each interview was tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber, and organized to preserve the data in their original form. The data in all their forms were available to the members of my dissertation committee, who provided a specialized form of peer review. Peer approval of data and data analysis also enhances reliability.

The fourth kind of trustworthiness, neutrality or objectivity, refers to the findings themselves and "is achieved when auditability, truth value and applicability are established" (Sandelowski, as cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 132). Erickson (1988) pointed out:

> The [story] persuades the reader that things were in the setting as the author claims they were, because the tense of immediate presence captures the reader's attention, and because the concrete particulars of the events reported in the [story] substantiate the general analytic concepts the author is using to organize the research report. . . . In sum, richness of detail in and of itself does not make a [story] valid. Rather, it is the combination of richness and interpretive perspective that makes the account valid. Such a valid account is not simply a description; it is an analysis. Within the details of the story, selected carefully, is contained a statement of a theory of organization and meaning of the events described. (p.150)

In this dissertation, I ensured neutrality as closely as is possible in naturalistic inquiry by reviewing board meeting minutes, newspaper articles, my reflexive journal (personal journal), and transcripts from the pilot study. The data from these sources and from the in-depth interviews were examined with respect to various theoretical paradigms, including career development, presidential leadership, and feminist leadership. The analysis presented the data through the themes that emerged during data collection.

Summary

This chapter presented the study's overall methodology. The research design, data analysis, the researcher's role, and ethical considerations were addressed. In addition, validity and reliability concerns were also presented.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.
—Maya Angelou

In this chapter, I present portrayals of the three female former community college presidents and give voice to their stories. According to Gilligan (1982), voice

> is natural and cultural. . . . It is composed of breath and sound, words, rhythm, and language. It is a powerful psychological instrument and channel, connecting inner and outer worlds. Speaking and listening are a form of psychic breathing. This ongoing relational exchange among people is mediated through language and culture, diversity and plurality. For these reasons, voice is a key for understanding the psychological, social, and cultural order—a litmus test of relationships and a measure of psychological health. (p. xvi)

In these portrayals, I describe the three female former community college presidents as they shared their perceptions of themselves, their families, their relationships, and their careers. These portrayals communicate to the reader the multiple realities constructed by the respondents. Direct quotations reveal to the reader "the depth of emotion, the ways they [the respondents] have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (Patton, 1990, p. 24).

According to hooks (1989), "Speaking becomes both a way to engage in active self-transformation and a rite of passage where no one moves from being object to subject. . . . Only as subjects can we speak. As objects we remain voiceless—our being defined and interpreted by others" (p. 12). Gilligan (1982) also observed that "Bringing in women's lives changes the voice—how the human story is told, and also who tells it." She acknowledged that "differences in the body, family relationships, and in societal and cultural position made a psychological difference" (p. xi).

The portrayals are presented in themes or stages that evolved during the interviews with each respondent: her early years, which includes her relationship with her family and her early school experiences; college and university experiences; marriage and family relationships; her career path; role models and mentors; a composite of experiences and values that created each former president's sense of self; and finally the strategies she used during her career and in seeking the community college presidency.

All of the portrayals are told using the respondents' words and descriptions. Each study begins with a thick description of the respondent, followed by themes grounded in the data. These themes reflect what were important to each respondent in terms of her career development experiences and career influences. Each portrayal concludes with a summary that gathers together the strands into a whole cloth. Each respondent's identity and that of all other important characters, places of employment, and names of schools have been protected by using pseudonyms.

The community college system in the southeastern state in this study celebrated its 25th anniversary in the late 1980s. In this southeastern state's 58 community colleges, the percentages of women were 12.0% (up from 3.4% in 1996); senior administrators, 32.6% (up from 28% in 1996); executives, administrators, and managers, 49.3% (up from 44% in 1996) (North Carolina Community College System, 1998-1999). These statistics reflect some growth in the number of female administrators in the community college system being examined, yet a woman was not appointed president of a community college in this system until 22 years after the system began (52 years if one counts the very first public two-year college in the state). The three women in this study served as community college presidents during the late 1970s and 1980s.

Former president one (FP1) serves as executive vice president and chief administrative officer for a large corporation. She is white, in her fifties, has a Ph.D., and served as a community college president from July 1986 to September 1992. Former president two (FP2) serves in state government as an elected official. She is white, in her fifties, has an Ed.D., and served as a community college president from January 1987 to October 1993. Former president three (FP3) is the vice-president of curriculum in a community college. She is white, in her fifties, and, according to her CV, has an Ed.D. FP3 served as a community college president from May 1979 to December 1981.

Portrayals

Former President One

Former president one (FP1) currently serves the public sector as vice president and chief administrative officer of The Herbin Corporation. Prior to this position, she served as president of a community college in a southeastern state. FP1 is a strong, articulate woman whose self-confidence and commanding presence belie her short stature. She is aggressive both personally and professionally. She likes challenges and thrives on problem-solving.

Her career in education began as an instructor and department head. "I had been a nominal department head before, but it was a two-person department . . . it was not truly an administrative position." FP1 began her higher education administration career "as vice president for instruction, which she describes as "a fairly high entry point."

Early Years

FP1 was born in the Southeast and was the eldest of two children. Her father "managed farms and fertilizer plants, and he had a degree in chemical engineering from [a technical institute]." Her mother held a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in guidance and counseling. "Both my parents were college educated, which is probably really one of the deciding factors, and I came from a family where there was just a very high value on education."

FP1 perceives her family as important influences. Her mother was a strong role model. "She's wonderfully independent in a lot of positive ways . . . she's very principled, and a lady." FP1 recalls that she was "not close to [her] father at all," because "he became ill and prior to that he traveled a lot with his job." Her earliest childhood influence was not her mother or father, but her grandfather. Her grandfather "was a railroad engineer and was very principled." FPl says "They [her family] thought I was the center of the universe, that I could do anything. My family had absolutely unconditional loving personalities. And what a gift that is for a child."

FP1 attended parochial school for 2 years and then attended public schools in her home state through 4th grade. At age 10, her family moved to another southeastern state where she attended public schools through high school. "I was a superior student on through elementary . . . making all A's through elementary school, and most of junior high."

FP1 was active in school. She worked on the school newspaper and was involved in student government. She began working at age 14 at the local newspaper. FP1 states that she "did well in high school academically, but not outstanding." She "struggled with math, didn't like the sciences." According to FP1, her most inspiring teacher in high school "was an English teacher . . . that led to my interest in English."

College and University

By the time FP1 had graduated from school, her father had had a stroke, which shaped the decision to attend a local university rather than going away to college. She worked during the summers at a local newspaper office where she wrote a weekly column. FP1 states that she "got a small scholarship to the university and was in the honors program. At age 19, she married her high school sweetheart, and at age 20 had a child. Despite these responsibilities, she completed college in 3 years. "I didn't want anybody to think that getting married early and having a child would change the course . . . I just really threw myself into demonstrating my superiority through my grades."

FP1 holds bachelor's and master's degrees in English from the same university. The most significant educational experience was her experience as an English major: ". . . both on the undergraduate and graduate level. I think it [the English degree] created an ability to communicate, to analyze, to criticize, to think." She further states, "if I had to pick anything out that has been the single most valuable attribute . . . , I think that it came from a liberal arts undergraduate education, and it has stood me through many career changes very, very well."

She worked through college and was a graduate teaching assistant. Her love of teaching was an influence that led her to the presidency. "I love teaching, and I've always loved school. I like to go to school. I like to teach school. I mean, there's nothing about it I don't like." Upon completing the master's degree, she was hired as an English teacher at a local technical institute where she taught for approximately 2 years. FP1 recalls, "I loved the community college concept, and I loved what I was doing. I just threw myself into it." She loved the empowerment that the concept of the community college gave individuals. "I thought it [the community college] was one of the grandest visions in all of education." Upon further reflection, FP1 states that she cared for students and faculty and that she wanted to make a difference.

At the end of the 2 years at the technical institute, she was recruited by her alma mater to assist in developing a post master's degree program to prepare individuals with master's degrees in English to teach in community colleges. During her 3-year tenure, she helped develop a journal that she boasts is "now probably the number one journal of English teachers in the U.S."

While at her alma mater, FP1 began contemplating the need to obtain the doctorate. She states, "once you get in the university system, you've got to get your doctorate or forget it." FP1 enrolled initially in the Ed.D. doctorate program in a university just a few hours from where she lived, but she was then recruited to attend a university in another state. She was awarded a university fellowship and completed her Ph.D. The doctoral program had a strong influence on her. She states:

> I do think that the doctoral program at [university where she completed her degree] was extraordinary in that . . . we focused on content and the application . . . and how to manage the pressures and the stresses of the kind of roles that you're planning to enter. . . . A lot of the basic management processes and leadership fundamentals that I learned have stood me in good stead. . . . It's hard to describe what happens to you in that program, but almost everybody who leaves it, leaves with the belief that they can be a community college president, whether they ever aspired to that or not.

Marriage and Family

While in undergraduate school, FP1 married her high school sweetheart and gave birth to her first son. She later divorced and remarried just before beginning the doctoral program. She has been married 25 years and, when asked how her personal life affected her career path, she states that ". . . [I] married a very strong, very centered man, who encourages me . . . he nurtures me . . . who cares about me a lot. I literally could not have . . . made the moves in my career that I've made were that not just the way he is."

FP1 and her second husband also had a son. She describes her husband as "an incredible parent to both boys." FP1 believes her career path positively affected her personal life.

> I think the choice to work, for a woman, has a fundamental impact on how you live your life, how you raise your children. But I think that the career path that I chose was largely a liberating career path. . . . I tended to work in settings that were slightly on the front edge of providing flex time, and I tended to be in senior positions, which, by definition, have more control. I moved fairly early into positions where I had more latitude in some of those things.

Career Path

FP1 began her career as an English instructor at a technical institute in a southeastern state. She then became an assistant professor, developing a curriculum for a post-master's program in English at ATI. While pursuing the doctorate, she became the academic vice president of instruction at Starke Community College. She had "the job of hiring of the initial faculty, all the department heads, and reviewing all of the initial faculty appointments." She describes herself as "being woefully underqualified to do it [the job]," but that she was making choices that would "shape what the academic life in that college [was] like." FP1 states that she "knew a little bit, and made good, solid, safe choices." After 2 to 3 years in this position, FP1 was offered a position as assistant to the chancellor.

> That was a tough decision 'cause I had to leave a job that's clearly on the track to the presidency, a campus presidency, and make a move . . . [to] a lateral

> position. . . . The assistant to the chancellor is a high-level position, but a lateral [move] from where I was.

When FP1 reflects on this position, she states it was an "incredible learning experience, because you really got that view of working with the board, working with external communities that you don't get in a campus setting. The board interactions were extremely important."

Following the retirement of the chancellor, an internal replacement was appointed. FP1 was to be the associate vice chancellor, a role "which [she] leapt at the chance to do." She describes her responsibilities as having the

> overall integration and coordination accountabilities for all of the academic vice presidents and the student services' vice presidents on the seven campuses and had direct line accountability for the academic services, whether they were of the technical occupational curriculum development or international programs, all the things that we offered from a district level, instructional television center, all that stuff.

Two years later, FP1 was offered the opportunity to serve as interim president of another community college. "But then the chemistry clicked when I went over there as president, and I became the president. . . ."

FP1 had served almost 3 years as president, when she was encouraged to apply for the presidency at a different community college. She remembers that one of her mentors had told her, "you know its probably the only job [in this southeastern state] you'd be interested in." She was selected for the presidency and served 6 years.

FP1 was then recruited by a large corporation to join its leadership team as vice president for corporate communications. After 2 years, she became senior vice president of corporate resources and chief administrative officer. Three years later, she became executive vice president and chief administrative officer. She states:

> My job has evolved because our company has evolved. We've more than doubled in size. Our scope's become international, and the company has changed dramatically. If you look at my job title, it might look similar, but the scope of it is just unbelievably different than what it was.

When asked about the circumstances or factors that led her into and out of the various positions she has held throughout her career, she says, "I was never feeling the need to move . . . but I want to have fun when I work." She continues, "these are not the only opportunities that have come along. These are the ones I've chosen to follow." FP1 continues to reflect on the opportunities she chose to follow in her career:

> They were the opportunities that had something very attractive . . . and it was almost inevitably the challenge. It was almost inevitably the opportunity to learn more, do more, influence more. . . . The opportunities seemed quite natural. Just the flow of things.

FP1 describes herself as "a relationship-oriented person." Because of her interest in people,

> several of the ones [jobs] were very tied to people who held the other jobs. When these people were gone, I wanted to be in a place where I had my own sandbox.

> where the relationship mattered less, and I could . . . create relationships within the institution.

When reflecting on her career path, FP1 states, "it wasn't a career path, the way people think about it. If you had asked me, did I have a set of objectives . . . and how did you plan this? Sorry, didn't happen. It wasn't anything systematic and strategic about it." FP1 quotes her mother as saying that "luck is when preparation meets opportunity," and FP1 states "I had great preparation."

Mentors

FP1 had strong significant influences in her life, helping shape her sense of self and modeling what she could accomplish. She has a clear definition of mentoring and the requirements of such a relationship.

> These [mentors] are people who are willing to . . . be very honest with me, put me down. I need someone who's got an ego at least as strong as mine to mentor me, and an intellect as strong as mine. In all honesty, not everybody can mentor you. Somebody's got to be willing to push back at you."

As a doctoral student, she interviewed with the chancellor of a community college system, who later became one of her mentors.

> [He] was tough, crusty, had a reputation as being very biased against women. I never found that to be true. . . . He was demanding, and he didn't have much of a soft side, so a lot of people interpreted that as being biased. What was so good about him was his absolute honesty.

Another influential leader who took a personal interest in her career and helped her move through the ranks was the retired head of a prominent community college professional organization.

> I worked with [him] as associate vice chancellor, when he was vice chancellor of the district. He is intellectually very powerful and really is one of the best I know at relationships. His sensitivity to other human beings is really profound. He understands what makes people tick, what they care about, what motivates them, how to influence them. I learned tremendous amounts from [him] about my affect on other people. He really helped to educate me about when I was . . . coming on too strong.

She sees another strong influence in her life as her best friend who "works in counseling in a community college." She "met [Neva] through [another mentor] when he selected four women as the individuals who had made the most outstanding contributions to the . . . district." She and [Neva] were among the four selected. She remembers, "we had the beginning of a friendship . . . very honest from the outset. . . . She was the person who was always called on and was such a wonderful facilitator of really difficult issues." FP1 says that Neva advised her during one of her most difficult challenges she has ever faced—having to "lay off 17 nurses that we'd hired probably 2 years before." She says " the tendency was to distance yourself—try to handle it formally. . . ." The advice her mentor gave her was

> you've got to look everyone of those women in the eye, and you've got to talk to them about what's happening and meet this face-to-face . . . treat them with

> respect as human beings. That sounds so simple, but it is just a fundamental lesson, and it's hard.

FP1 states, "I look back at that as actually a positive experience. That's the kind of coaching and mentoring she gave to me."

For her, FP1 admits that the hardest part of the work as a community college president was "not the academic discipline . . . not the management skills, . . . not even the leadership piece . . . , but dealing with the people side of the equation is what I've worked the hardest on and where my mentors have been the most important to me."

FP1 states that she is a mentor and has been a mentor throughout her career to both men and women. "I hope I mentor actively . . . that's extremely important to me."

Strategies for Success

FP1 identifies certain skills that were useful during her experience as a former president and in her current corporate position. ". . . [A] lot of people . . . underestimate the importance of the vision . . . , that ability to give a voice to a vision for the college, both internally and externally. I continue to think that the vision, and the articulation of the vision, is extremely important."

Other important skills are "strategic thinking, strategic planning, organization and basic management skills, and an understanding of curriculum, curriculum development, and curriculum design." She emphasizes the importance of relationship-building. "Never forget it." She warns, "It doesn't matter whether it's outside, inside, wherever you are, I think it is a relationship-building job."

Her advice to women is "to aspire to achieve something, not in the way of a position, but . . . in terms of their influence, in terms of their results, their goals." She acknowledges that there may be different routes or way to achieve these goals. "I think to hang your hat on a position is probably not the best way to go about it.

> You may end up there, because you continued to try to exert that kind of influence, but . . . be sure you've really got a vision and you know how to plan it. You can deliver results that really enabled that particular vision or direction, and then you'll get to a good place.

When asked about the role self-confidence has in the pursuit of the presidency, FP1 laughs, "I think it [self-confidence] is critical. You've got to believe you can do and I did [she snickers]. I thought I could do anything."

Sense of Self

She is sincere in her belief that doing well and being the best you can be at something is important. "What motivates me is doing good. I am internally driven to do whatever I do well. That's important to me. I really want to make a difference with people." She continues:

> The factors that really influenced me were to do good by providing leadership within a setting in which you really contribute…I wanted to do good and had perhaps the mistaken impression that I could. . . . I like to challenge myself and like to see what I can do over the next horizon. . . . I'm always looking for my level of incompetence.

Her sense of self is articulately captured in her personal creed, which she read to a group of 30 women, the Working Family Support Group, several years ago:

> Because I love myself as God loves me . . .
>
> I am patient with myself;
>
> I do my best for myself;
>
> I do not resent myself;
>
> I do not belittle myself;
>
> I do not have unrealistic expectations of myself;
>
> I am not discourteous to myself;
>
> I do not isolate myself;
>
> I do not get irritated with myself;
>
> I do not identify myself with my bad points; I am not grimly satisfied with myself when I do wrong . . .
>
> . . . On the contrary, I am pleased when I do right;
>
> I am never judgmental to myself;
>
> I am always loyal to myself;
>
> I always bear with myself. (Published in the *Charlotte Observer* by Elizabeth G. Cook in 1986.)

Barriers

FP1's first exposure to gender discrimination came during an internship while she was working on her doctorate. The internship was to familiarize her with the registration process, but instead of developing an understanding of the registration process, "the idiot registrar has me licking envelopes." She reflects, "the interesting part was not that it happened, but figuring out, okay, how do you work yourself out of this situation and reposition it so that you're not a second-class citizen on this internship and there's a productive role to play." She describes the experiences as "interesting, and a good indication of barriers women fight all the time."

While serving as an instructor of English, FP1 shares that she faced another barrier related to textbook selection. She reminds me that this was a time when the Vietnam vets were coming back and the Civil Rights struggle was continuing. "We've got textbooks, and people—the students—are saying, you know, why do these textbooks have no black authors? You know, where are they?" Interestingly, the faculty at the community college had no input into textbook selection. At the time, a university chose the textbooks. "We offered the courses sort of on contract . . . , and we used the standard freshman entry text." Her solution was "to figure out a way around that, so I'd apply for a grant to bring in visiting artists. . . . then I'd select black poets or whatever and bring them in." At that time, her solution was "seen as taking some risk. You didn't challenge authority. You didn't challenge the status quo."

FP1 states that not being able to select the textbooks was a "barrier to what I thought being effective was, because I really do believe that teaching is a lot of evoking of thoughts and ideas and creating relevance, particularly teaching English." Given the circumstances, she says "it was a real struggle to do that."

When asked to describe how it felt to serve at a time when males dominated the community college system in administrative positions, she states emphatically that "it felt good." She continues:

> Some of it just has to do with timing. It's nothing but an accident of age that I was coming along at exactly the time that other people were opening doors. . . . a lot of people tilled the field so other people like me could walk through the door, but I ended up doing some of the walking. So for me, that's a very familiar feeling. . . . I'm still part of many, many organizations in which I'm the only women serving on corporate boards today. . . . In fact, I'm one of one on two boards I serve on. I'm the only woman on the [board of the corporation where I work]. That's just been the way I've lived my life. So, it felt fine, because it felt normal.

When asked what changes she believes are necessary to increase the number of females in top administrative positions, she says without hesitation that "there are now many qualified women in the "pipeline"—women who have prepared themselves through education and experience for these roles, and you've just got to have boards who are open to considering those candidates and moving those candidates into position." Her voice is firm as she further states:

> The biggest change is that people take real care with the selection of those boards and not put token women in there. They really need to put women on there who are thoughtful and focused and interested in making a difference and make sure that you've got that kind of point of view on the local boards.

FP1 shares her views on the overall community college climate at the time she served as president.

> It [the community college system] was biased against females. And I think it translated into the fact that not many of them were hired, but I think that bias came generally from the boards doing the selecting than from the institutions. I think there was a clear bias against women, and, in fact, a fundamental belief that they couldn't be effective with the business community. . . . That was based on nothing but stereotyping so far as I can tell.

However, FP1 says she did not experience bias against women at the second community college where she served as president. She remembers thinking, following her interview for the presidency, "there may be other reasons I don't get this job, but it will have nothing to do with gender, and I never once from that board sensed that that was any kind of issue at all."

She summarizes her beliefs on discriminatory practices and barriers to women's advancement by stating, "I think it's a board thing. That's why those board appointments are so critically important. That's what it's really going to take to really change it. It's not emanating from inside the institution. It's emanating from the board."

Closing Impressions

FP1 is a strong, articulate, and self-confident woman with demonstrated administrative and organizational strengths. She was raised to have a strong appreciation for the value of education. She is sincere in her belief that doing well and being the best you can be is important. Her predilection to systems-thinking made her an effective administrator in a community college with strong ties to business and industry.

FP1's success came from applying her natural talents, learning new skills, and positioning herself for the next opportunity. She drew on previous knowledge to recognize the right career fit when it came along. Her career was never directed. Instead, she made choices based more on intuition than on intention. Though some may find her career to have been serendipitous, that impression is not entirely true. Granted, she was in the right place at the right time, but she was in the right place because she had positioned herself to be there. She learned new skills and capitalized on her natural talents to be recognized as an effective and competent administrator.

Former President Two

Former president two (FP2) currently serves an elected official in state government. Prior to this position, she served on the Board of Education for 12 years and as president of a community college in a mountainous region of the southeastern state being studied. Her career is atypical in that she "did not come up through the community college system." She speaks with pride about her experience at the community college and talks about her commitment to its growth.

Early Years

FP2 was born in the Northeast but grew up in a small town in the mountains of a southeastern state. Her family was poor. Her mother had a sixth-grade education, and her father a ninth-grade education. "My father worked away from home most of the time, 'cause there was just basically no work in the county we lived. He served in the war where he became a cosmetologist." After his military service, he worked at a bomb plant. "My mother was a cook, and a waitress, and cleaned motels." "My mother," says FP2, "was very bright and could do a lot of [crafts]."

FP2 was the eldest of three children and attended elementary and high school in one of the poorest counties in this southeastern state. "I've always had poor eyesight, and was not in good health, so I didn't participate in sports. I put my energies into reading." FP2 says that she always loved to read and began reading at the age of 3. Because her family struggled financially, FP2 worked as a janitor during her junior and senior years of high school. She swept the floors after school for the "maintenance man," and he "paid me $10 a month to do that."

FP2 says, "I truly did not have a lot of plans when I was in school. I didn't know what I was going to do. Even my senior year in high school, I had not made any plans for going to college." When reflecting on her high school years during the early 1960s, she states that English was her favorite subject, and she was the first female to become president of her senior class. She says, " I was active in school. I was in the Drama Club and in the Beta Club. . . . I was involved in academic sorts of things." FP2 graduated third in her high school class.

According to FP2, her relationship with her parents was pretty good. "I was not a real rebellious kid. I was pretty studious. My parents really expected me to do well in school…a lot was expected of me because I was the oldest child." Because her mother worked outside the home a lot, she took care of the children. She also "did all the ironing and most of the cleaning."

FP2 recalls that her father enjoyed reading. "My father read constantly and so I got a lot of love for reading from my father."

College and University

FP2 attended a local college for one semester but then dropped out and moved north to live with her grandparents. She worked as a clerk-typist in the financial district of a large northeastern city. After a short period, she moved back home and enrolled in the local state university. She then transferred to a university farther from home. "They [her family] didn't want me to transfer 'cause I was in the middle of my junior year, but finally I got in and worked full time, went to school part time. It took me 7 years to get my undergraduate degree, and then we moved back to the mountains." FP2 received her undergraduate degree in English. She recalls, "I worked for a while, then went back and got my master's degree."

Upon completion of the master's degree in sociology, "with 6 hours of coursework in education," she began a series of college teaching and administrative jobs, including working at Calgory State University in 1972 and remained there until 1987.

She pursued the doctorate degree at Bacote University, where she "took one or two courses a semester. I designed my own program. It was curriculum in teaching in higher education." She worked for a number of years on the doctorate, and she does not have fond memories of the experience. She describes, "I was treated in the most rotten ways every registration. It was, excuse my expression, but I have to use this 'cause it is so applicable. It truly was 'student as nigger' situation." She says the "students were treated terribly in the registration process. . . . I worked for 8 years on my doctorate at

[Bacote] . . . and after 8 years in that program, the dean did not even know my name." She says, "I found [Bacote] to be a very, very cold place . . . and it made me more determined in my work to see that students were not treated that way." She completed the doctorate. In reflecting upon the experience, she says that "in a sense, getting my doctorate was a union card for me, and I knew that if I wanted to stay in education, I had to have that union card."

Marriage and Family

After returning home from a short stay up north, FP2 married and gave birth to her only child. She describes her husband as "a mixed bag in his support." To get her master's, she had to attend a university that was several hours away. "He cooperated with me when I went to get my master's by keeping our 6-year-old daughter at home with him while I spent Monday through Thursday [out of town]." She explains that her husband, "on a day to day basis . . . is not supportive of me; he denigrates me and what I do constantly, so it is a struggle for me. He is very unpredictable and difficult to deal with."

Career Path

When asked about what influences led to her career decision to seek the presidency, FP2 states:

> I was drawn to teaching. I would have become a high school English teacher if I could have afforded to do student teaching. When that was not possible, I saw the opportunity to get a master's degree and give myself the flexibility of teaching in a community college or in the university.

Prior to the presidency, FP2 had held numerous positions at Calgory State. She had taught sociology to freshman students, became assistant dean for the general college, was coordinator for developmental studies, director of orientation and faculty advising, then became coordinator of the transfer program. In the mid 1980s, she took a job in state government. "I took a leave of absence from [the university] and came to work at [the state capital]," in the [central office]. Her job at the university overlapped the one in state government.

FP2 reflects on her plan to become a community college president. "Becoming a community college president was just a fluke. . . . Becoming the college president appealed to me . . . it was my home county, it was adjacent to where I was living. . . . It was a confluence of a lot of serendipitous things." When asked how she would describe her readiness to become a president, she identifies strengths and weaknesses.

> I had a lot of strengths in the sense that I was very committed to the job. I was committed to the students. I'm committed to the concept of the community colleges. I truly believe in the ideal of the community colleges—the helping people who would probably not go on to a 4-year school get started in a 2-year school, to those people who delay continuing their education, to people who need additional skill-building. I believe truly in the community college and what it does. And had I had a community college when I was growing up that's where I would have gone.

This commitment to the community college ideal is "probably the most important skill or strength or attribute a community college president should have." FP2 says that her greatest strength was that she "believed in the students and was committed to making the school the best it could possibly be."

She speaks of her weaknesses. "I was totally unprepared for the politics involved. I truly was naïve. I did not have the technical language related to FTE's and the kinds of things you need to know about. But I knew that going in, and the board knew that going in."

When asked about her preparation to become president, she says she was "absolutely prepared for that job." Her prior experiences as a teacher, a coordinator of the transfer program, and head of academic advising and orientation had prepared her. "Everything about my life had led me directly to that job [the presidency]. And then I felt like all of that preparation simply helped me get to where I am [as an elected official], so it all came together."

In reflecting on her attaining the presidency, she states, "I've often said I do not know where in the world I got the guts to say . . . I'm interested. It was absolutely like another person speaking. But it just seemed like exactly what I should have been doing." FP2 mentions God as an influence in her life. "From that time to now, I have felt very keenly that God has a strong hand in what's happening in my life."

Mentors

FP2 shares this definition of a mentor. "I think that mentors should be role models but also actively 'lead' in ways that help a person develop positively." In talking about mentors or role models in her family, she says that she "had an almost complete dearth of mentoring from [her] own family, which was very dysfunctional, and there were certainly no role models . . . . so people who could help me learn the things I needed to learn to be successful, especially in education, were critical."

FP2 attributes much of her success to mentors. She mentions several individuals who were influential in her life. "I had many mentors. Unlike many professional women, most of my mentors were men." One of the earliest influences started in high school. She recalls that "the man who was a student teacher said . . . you need to go to college. You need to read these books. You need to marry someone with a college education."

When she worked at Edward University, she had a female mentor—a secretary—and "she was very good. She was emphatic about doing things right. She was effective." FP2 says she "learned a lot about processes from her." She recalls working for several doctors, whom she describes as "perfectionists." One individual for whom she worked, she describes as "probably the best human being I've ever known in my life, and the smartest human being I've ever known in my life. He was so smart and good." FP2 says that "he was a master at raising money and had a vision that put him way ahead of his time." Not only did she learn a lot from working with him, she says he taught her "about pushing the envelope." She relates an experience with him that taught her a lot:

> I would say to him, ". . . the deadline for this is tomorrow! Oh, we haven't done it yet." And he'd say, "Calm down. . . . I'd rather be late and be good, than to be on time and to be lousy." So he would call up and say, "I'm so sorry. We're not going to be able to get this in on time. Could we have an extension?" And they'd say, "of course."

From him, she states that "I learned that rather than have to live again within the rules that don't always make sense, make it be right for what it is you're doing."

FP2 also currently has a mentor. She says, "there were things I could talk with her about that I could have never talked to men about and she could commiserate with me." She continues, "her experience is invaluable . . . and I trust her instincts."

She describes these mentors as being very secure but describes herself as being not as secure as they are. "I have learned that being female, [you] doubt yourself a lot more than men doubt themselves. I saw very little doubt on the parts of these men, these people that I work with. They were wonderful role models." She goes on to say that "all of the mentors [she] had were honest but very diplomatic. Their comments were always aimed at building up with positive criticism rather than tearing down self esteem."

When asked if she currently serves as a mentor, FP2 emphatically replies, "Oh, yes. All the time. And I have encouraged students to do internships with me. I've had many interns since I've been here [position as an elected official]." She says she visits schools and attends "scout meetings wherever I'm asked. . . . That's mentoring in the sense of trying to help people become comfortable with the [governmental] process."

Strategies for Success

FP2 identifies certain skills that were useful during her experience as a former community college president. She states:

> I think certainly organizational skills you have to have, and I have those. I'm very well organized. I know how to do 'to do' lists. I know how to set priorities. I think

> understanding the budget is very, very helpful. I think you must understand the budget side in order to survive.

Because of her experience in state government, FP2 says that describes two of the best skills she possessed going into the presidency were that she "knew how state government worked [and she] knew how the legislature worked."

When asked what advice she would give other aspiring women regarding useful skills, she says resolutely, ". . . get the credentials." When asked how her career path affected her personal life, she restates the importance of getting the credentials.

> You may be the most skillful person in the world, but in the academic world, you have to have credentials. So getting my doctorate was a union card for me. And certainly as you're getting the credentials, do everything you can to get the skills to go along with that. . . . I don't think you can do it without the skills. I would do everything I could to look outside of education to gain a more general focus on life.

FP2 also stresses the importance of being involved in activities outside of education and of learning as much about business and technology as one can. For example, she was the first female member of the Rotary club in her hometown.

> I would say to people, certainly become a member of Rotary. Get on a board or commission or some activity where you learn what's going on the world other than education. Because we become so myopic in education, and we learn things a certain way, we don't realize that the way we do things is such a small part of what's going on in the world. . . . And I would say, in the future, anything that

> you can do with learning about business, certainly computers, whatever's going on as far as technology is concerned is a plus. . . . So, I advocate to people that they try to learn whatever they can about things other than education."

FP2 feels strongly about possessing technological skills. She says, "… in this day and time, you've got to know what's happening in technology and with computers. And if you cannot use those tools that are out there, then you've got a problem."

Sense of Self

According to FP2, her husband describes her as "a round peg in a square hole," because of her "innovative thinking and [her] entrepreneurial skills." She says, "I've always put [these skills] to work in education and government, whether or not appreciated." FP2 describes herself as "the kind of person who will live within structure—rules and regulations—if they make sense, I live within. But when they don't make sense, I press the issues." She goes on to say,

> I look for exceptions, or I look for ways to make things happen. I like to be in win-win situations, and if it means that somebody has to think differently from the way they've normally thought, then I press that issue. I question . . . I'm told that I have extremely fine analytical skills, and so I put those to good use.

To illustrate her persistence and determination, she relates the following incident:

> The dean of continuing education and I had a long list of things to talk about, and I brought up something, and the dean said, "We tried that once. It didn't work." I said, "Well, let's try it again." He said, "It won't work." And I said, "You know,

> I'm the kind of person that's got to get knocked down fifty times before I give up on something that I think is a really good idea."

When asked about the role self-confidence played in influencing her career decisions, she laughs and says, "I don't think of myself as being real self-confident, but I know that other people see it. I mean, they see me as arrogant, not just self-confident." She continues. "I have strong opinions about things and I state what my strong opinions are. I'm the kind of person that just goes right on with what I believe in, and I guess it made a difference."

When asked about the most significant challenge she faced in her career, FP2 describes her experience at Jasper Community College. She describes her battle to improve the school. She states:

> I went there with all the right intentions and very naïve. I left with my intentions and my character in place but much less naïve. [Jasper] is so important to the area because it is the only chance that many people have not only for getting an education and/or degree (those are not synonymous) but also for building self-esteem which is sorely needed in that service area. . . . I had hoped to make it so good that it could never lapse back into the mediocre state that I found it in but I am not sure what I did will last.

FP2 demonstrates her self-confidence. "So you know, it [the experience at Jasper] didn't harm me in any way except not give me the chance to continue what I was doing. But I knew I'd find another outlet for my talents."

Barriers

Like former president 1, FP2 also believes the greatest barrier to be the board of trustees. "The biggest problem is the board of trustees. I mean, there's no question about it. There are qualified women out there." She continues

> We've got the degrees, we've got the experience, we've got the know-how, but we don't have the support network. We don't have the peers . . . we don't have trustees. We don't have women or men on the board of trustees willing to take chances on women.

According to FP2, "women are still in a no-win situation as far as top jobs are concerned . . . whether you're in the private sector or in the public sector. If you're outspoken like I am, you're too aggressive. If you don't speak up, you're too meek. . . . They will always find something wrong with you." She compares men and women. "For men, it's okay to learn on the job. For women, you've got to know it all before you come in, or you're not good enough." She further explains, "so we're qualified, but the climate is wrong."

Her advice in dealing with barriers is to make certain you know what the true barriers are.

> We have to look at our society and see where the barriers are. And they are still there. What I say to women, when I talk to them, is make sure that it is the societal situation and not you. I mean, don't have some awful characteristic that keeps you from being hired as the president. I mean, don't have some sort of tic that drives everybody crazy . . . that makes you unacceptable."

FP2 says that "the flaws in women are accentuated, when with men, they're downplayed." She indicates that as time passes, she believes this attitude toward women will change.

Closing Impressions

Throughout her life, FP2 has questioned and challenged the status quo. She is an innovator, always looking to make things happen, despite powerful obstacles both personally and professionally. She is an excellent communicator and an avid reader. FP2 is a determined achiever who has worked very hard to prove herself as an academic and as an academic leader. Her career development experiences prepared her for each step along her career path. She is explicit in describing the challenges she faced during her career, and her ability to analyze and to learn from her experiences has contributed to her success.

FP2 possesses a high degree of integrity and honesty. She is a creative thinker who is quick to perceive situations. She is a down-to-earth, unpretentious woman, with strong analytical skills. Throughout her career, she demonstrated a commitment to her students and to serving her community. She has a strong Christian faith and strives for the best in every endeavor. "It has always been my feeling that God led me to the task and has given me strength and knowledge for the work. Everything that I have done and tried to do has been aimed at helping others" (December 1993, newspaper article).

If asked to find one word to describe FP2 and her career, one would choose "committed." FP2 was very dedicated to her college, to education, and to providing students with educational opportunities to ensure their success. She is dedicated to the type of education offered at two-year schools. As a former president, she worked with business and industry leaders to develop occupational programs that made local people successful in the workplace. She recognized how important technical education can be for a large portion of the American population.

If it were possible to identify three attributes that were important to FP2's career they would be her willingness to work hard, her desire to strive for excellence, and her commitment to serve her institution and her community. She states, ". . . my own life experience as an extremely poor minority in an area of minorities gave me the missionary 'zeal' to be a president. . . . There are too few folk like that in the system." Her strong determination allowed her career to flourish because she was willing to work for the greater good of the institution and was committed to the community college, its mission and its goals. Unlike the other former presidents, she did not have strong role models early in her life, so perhaps she sought out mentors because she felt the need to succeed, to prove herself, and sacrificed herself more in order to achieve.

Former President Three

Former president three (FP3) currently serves the community college system as vice president of curriculum. She served as the first female community college president in her home state, the southeastern state examined in this study. She began her career in education as the director of student activities for a community college in this same state.

Early Years

FP3, the eldest of three children, was born in the southeastern state being examined in this study. Her father holds a bachelor's degree in business, and her mother holds a bachelor's degree in music from an all-female college.

"I had a happy childhood, supportive parents who expected me to excel, and provided whatever I needed to excel." FP3 reflects, "we all grew up in those days when people were expected to have a certain discipline about themselves, and if they didn't, their parents would make sure that they were disciplined." She was the "the first child in the family, and so [her] sister, of course, learned from [her]." Therefore, FP3 says that as the oldest, she lacked a role model and was the one who always got into trouble. "But I would say overall, it was really a happy childhood, and I was very fortunate there. I was provided for. I didn't have to worry about where the next food would come from or clothing or things like that."

FP3 attended a neighborhood grade school. She says, " it was a 7-year school, and then we went to high school—a 5-year high school." FP3 was involved in many activities during high school. She says she "did everything . . . belonged to the Girls Association, . . . got to be a pretty good volleyball player, . . . was editor for the school newspaper and . . . president of the honor society." FP3 describes her high school years as happy ones. "[I] got into service clubs, all the things that people like to do and want to do, I was part of all that."

College and University

FP3 attended a college that was not her first choice. She wanted to attend her father's alma mater but could not because "in those days women could not have the first two years of college at [Edward University]. Women could only enter as juniors. So you always had to go to some other place first, and then transfer . . . after two years."

While attending Edward University was "elected president of [her] junior class," so she decided not to transfer. FP3 excelled in a lot of things and "had a hard time deciding what [she] wanted to major in." Eventually, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in sociology. Throughout college, she remained active in extracurricular activities, such as serving in student government and as chairman of the United Way Campaign, and she wrote for the newspaper.

She attended graduate school at Moore State University, where she completed her master's degree and first thought of entering the community college system. She describes that experience.

> I took a 600 level course in organization [with special permission from the professor]. . . . I got to know all these community college presidents. . . . One of them came to me and said, "You need to come into the community college system. . . . There are going to be far more women, and we're gonna need some good women role models and some good women administrators."

FP3 says this same community college president helped her access the community college system. He led her to sources where she could get money for her education.

helped her get to know some of the right people, and helped her realize there was a place for her in the community college system.

FP3 continues, "so not only did I do a master's thesis, but then I got into the doctoral program." She further explains, "I'm told I needed that doctorate by this one president, because I had two strikes against me—I was a woman and I was in education. I needed the doctorate." So FP3 received a community college fellowship during her matriculation in the doctoral program at Moore State and obtained a doctorate in education.

Career Path

After graduating from undergraduate school, FP3 had grown weary of school and decided to go up north. She worked as a "girl Friday" before becoming a "community organization specialist and field advisor" for a nonprofit organization. In reflecting on that experience, she says, "I had a great experience with the [council] and learning about a community organization. . . . so that was a great experience for what I'm doing today."

FP3 later moved back home and accepted a secretarial position as a personnel clerk for a brief time before again returning to work for the council, this time as a field director. Later, she spent a short time as "acting educational director" for the council.

FP3 began her career in higher education as the director of student activities at an area community college. In this position, she gained experience in community college budgeting, needs identification, planning, and evaluation. She says "that was a good experience, and a real growing experience for me."

Her next position was a deanship at an area community college, a position that would later evolve into a vice president position because of a reorganization. Three years later, FP3 learned about a presidential vacancy. She explains, "I was called one day and was told there was a job that was coming open where they were really looking for the most qualified person, and, it was the presidency, and would I consider going." She continues, "so I went for the interview, and, of course, I didn't have anything to lose, 'cause I wasn't gonna have anything to gain, so I had a great experience." FP3 says that she was happy with the position she held at the time and "had no intention of leaving." According to her, she was always happy in her jobs and did not feel compelled to leave. When the presidency position arose, she says, "I thought . . . if I don't go, then I would be considered a camp follower. And in those days, . . . they would say, 'Well, she's just a woman just seeing if she could get it [the presidency].'"

FP3 got the job and served as president of Brown Community College for 5 years. Following numerous challenges in this position, coupled with her mother's failing health, she decided to resign from the presidency, move back to her hometown, and to return to her previous place of employment. This time, however, she became associate vice president and dean of continuing education. Following this position, she accepted a position as associate executive vice president in the central office. She says her reason for changing jobs was not because she was unhappy in her job, but because her mother had cancer, and she needed to be closer to the doctors and the hospital. She also says it was "another experience and more money." She reflects, "I didn't ever think I'd work in the central office, but looking back on that, it was an outstanding experience. And I'm far better off for having gone there."

After the governor retired, FP3 says she "began looking and [her] old job opened up." She applied, was hired as the senior vice president, and now serves as the vice president for curriculum. She says of her current position, "we don't know if this is permanent or if it's temporary, but if he [the president] wanted me to be in charge of plants and grounds, I'd do it because I want to stay here until I retire."

When asked how her career path affected her personal life, FP3 responds, "I channeled my socialization as a woman, . . . welcoming hostess, and those kinds of things into community relations skills." She also says she had to "learn to become more circumspect and not as open."

When asked how her personal life affected her career path, FP3 responds, "I think being single, I was able to devote the time that I needed to do professional development, personal growth." She continues, "I was able to stay and get the job done, and . . . figure out how to get it done better, and how to reorganize something to get it done better. I didn't mind giving that kind of time."

Mentors

FP3 has had influences throughout her life that were significant to her choosing a career in higher education. While in graduate school, FP3 encountered a man who she considers to be her first mentor. She describes, "he did an awful lot to help me access the community college system, get to know some of the right people, and just help me see that maybe there was a place for me in the community college system."

Outside of her relationship with her first mentor, FP3 identified strong relationships with several men during her career who helped her gain more knowledge and experience. She says of one of the mentors, "[He] gave me the opportunity to say, yes, I have supervised men, I have worked with community college budgets." She admits that she was very lucky to have several men as supervisors who encouraged her professional growth. By developing relationships with her mentors, she was unconsciously preparing herself for the next step. She was broadening her horizons and accumulating diverse experience.

In talking about her mentoring experiences, she says, "I didn't have many female role models. There were a few good men with a social conscience and they were very helpful to me in opening doors and allowing me to run things by them." When asked about whether she mentors, she says, "I probably do. It's not formal." She expresses a commitment to give back. She feels strongly that women must create their own sense of connection to make an inroad into organization. According to FP3, the way to do that is to take an active mentoring role and to network with other women in education who are on an upward career path.

Strategies for Success

FP3 believes that she was prepared to become a president. She states, "I was ready, and not a bit intimidated by taking the next step." She says, "I was prepared as a leader and [as] a manager." She says she was "not prepared to deal with negative pettiness," which she adds "might continue to plague a college."

FP3 identifies certain skills that were useful during her experience as a former president. She says, "I think the community relations skills, but, also, I'm glad that I had managerial skills. . . . I think you need both." She adds that "time management is certainly a skill that's needed."

FP3's advice to aspiring women is "you have to be overly prepared experience wise. You know, you almost assume the academics, but I would rather have someone who knows what they're doing in that classroom than all those degrees . . . so experience is important." She goes on to say that "you must have a strong ego, 'cause you've got to take it." She talks about handling conflict.

> You get in situations where people don't agree with you, and you need to be able to stand your ground. That means, you can't take it personally. . . . You can't go wincing when someone gets upset. . . . You've got to really have a strong ego and believe that what you're standing for is right. . . . You've got to know who you are and how much you'll put up with.

Another skill FP3 mentions is delegation. "In my job I always tried to delegate as much as I could to someone else. That's why it's so important to have people who are good. If you have to delegate to mediocrity, you're not getting anything done. You're in trouble."

When asked what role self-confidence had in her pursuit of the presidency, she, like the other two former presidents, chuckles and then states firmly, "Plenty. I said [I had] a strong ego." She explains, "You have to have a lot of self-confidence that you know what you're doing. . . . I think that came from my parents. . . . They set expectations, and we met them."

FP3 believes she was prepared to become a president. She talks about some experiences she believes prepared her for the position. "I had done all the budgeting, I had helped the business manager decentralize the budgeting system, we had done a job content study and a wage salary survey, so I knew how to do all that." She advises that "you must learn to be a strong leader, 'cause you're gonna always have somebody throwing a rock at you."

Sense of Self

FP3 is a self-confident, assertive woman. She comes from a professional family who strongly supported her career. When asked what influences led to her career decision to become a community college president, she responds:

> I think I had successful administrative experiences. I had mentors to encourage me, and I also had the opportunity to compare my knowledge, skills, and attitudes with some who were already in the system, and decided that I was certainly equal to them, if not sometimes more so."

As she mentions several times during the interview, she adds, "I had a great dose of confidence also."

Barriers

FP3 talks about gender stereotyping and discrimination more fully than do the other former presidents. She says "there is still ongoing covert discrimination. But you kind of ignore it and go on. Maybe you just get unconscious about it, but if you ignore it, I feel like other people forget about it in time."

FP3 talks about the climate at the time when she served the system as president. She says, "I'm serving at a time when [the] then acting president of the system said, women can't be administrators because they'll cry all the time if something bad happens." She then mentions several men who played various roles in supporting her. A man recruited her into the system, two others hired her to give her a chance, and one promoted her. She talks about another man who "certainly tried to provide open doors, so I could go through." She says "are always a few [men], and, if some of them are leaders, and they're willing to open those doors, you can go through. And then when you can prove that you know what you're doing, then things [stereotyping and discrimination] disappear."

When asked what changes are necessary to improve the number of females in top administrative positions, FP3 gives almost the same response as the other two former presidents. She says without hesitation, "attitude adjustment of the trustees."

She says her most significant challenge in attaining the presidency was "proving that a qualified female could do the job." As in some of her earlier responses, this answer reflects the prevailing attitude at the time that women were not qualified to serve as top administrators.

Closing Impressions

FP3 has worked hard at proving she is an adept professional. Gender stereotyping and societal attitudes influenced her career. FP3 did not seek opportunities merely to see if she could obtain them. Instead, she applied for positions or accepted promotions because she thought she had something to bring to the position. She was pulled and, in some cases, led to positions not because she wished to climb the administrative ladder but because she felt she had something to contribute. She also felt confident that she could achieve the next level. FP3's primary goal was to serve her institution. If her career flourished because of her service, then that was an added bonus.

Though she does not see herself as a climber, she clearly positioned herself for the next opportunity. The depth of knowledge and breadth of experience gained during her service, coupled with self-confidence and a strong ego, made her the logical choice when she applied for administrative jobs and when she was asked to serve as a community college president. Her desire to serve and her commitment to academic issues propelled her up the academic administrative ladder. FP3 is an example of a consummate administrator whose career in higher education continues to flourish.

Summary

Through the thematic portrayals in this chapter, each participant's career development story has been presented. These female former community college presidents shared their perceptions of themselves, their families, their relationships, and their careers. In the next chapter, I discuss the major themes that emerged from the interviews, summarize the research findings, and discuss additional themes that emerged during data analysis.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I discuss the major themes that emerged from the interviews with the former presidents. According to Mills (1959), "A theme is some concept or theory that emerges from your data; some signal trend, some master conception, or key distinction" (p. 216). During the interviews, these former presidents revealed information about their (a) early years, represented by home, parents, and family; (b) college and university experiences; (c) marriage and family relationships; (d) career paths; and (e) barriers/challenges. Other themes that arose were the role models and mentors who influenced their careers and helped shape their sense of self. These women also conveyed their definitions of leadership and discussed strategies they believed influential in their ascension to the community college presidency.

Early Years

After reviewing the demographic data, I found a number of similarities among these female former presidents. For example, all three are white and from two-parent families in which both parents were in the home throughout much of their childhood. Consistent with Tessler's (1976) findings that women presidents are predominately firstborn, only children, or last born, all three former presidents in my study were first born. Two of the three former presidents' mothers had bachelor's degrees (Tessler, 1976), and two mothers were teachers. All three former presidents perceived their mothers as strong role models for instilling a strong work ethic and endurance. This finding is consistent with that of other researchers who found that mothers of female presidents served as early role models for career pursuits and achievement (Touchton et al., 1993; Vaughan et al., 1994). These data are supportive findings of past research that the mother's role may have a growing influence on her daughter's career choice (Vaughan et al., 1994).

These former presidents' fathers also had strong educational backgrounds, with two of the three holding bachelor's degrees. FP1's father was an engineer, FP2's a cosmetologist, and FP3's a banker. Two of the three sets of parents completed college degrees, and all conveyed strong educational values to their daughters. According to the literature, female community college presidents' backgrounds are more likely than those of male community college presidents' to include parents who have experience in higher education and to come from two-career families. More than 25% of both fathers and mothers of female community college presidents have earned either a two-year or four-year college degree (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997).

All three women were very active in school as youngsters, and they were involved in various activities as students in elementary and high school. FP1 participated in student government and worked for the school newspaper in high school, and she wrote a weekly column for the local newspaper. FP2 did not participate in sports but was a member of the Beta Club and the Drama Club, and she served as president of her senior class. FP3 was active in sports, student government, and the honor society. She also was editor of the school newspaper.

All three former presidents came from solid family units who recognized their considerable abilities early in their lives. They were intelligent, and their teachers recognized their talents. As first-born children, they were independent and were encouraged and expected, in varying degrees, by both their mothers and fathers to excel.

College and University

The three former presidents had diverse academic backgrounds with respect to their majors. An interesting commonality was their active participation in extracurricular activities while attending college.

FP1 earned a Ph.D., whereas former presidents 2 and 3 obtained the Ed.D. This finding is consistent with Vaughan and Weisman (1997) who reported that 86% of female community college presidents have earned the doctorate. Gillett-Karam (1988) also reported that the majority of the community college presidents in her study had earned doctorate degrees.

FP3 attended an all-female college. Researchers have reported that female students tend to perform better under the guidance of female faculty members and that women who attend all-female colleges tend to be more successful in their careers than are women who attend co-educational institutions. For example, according to Smith, Wolf, and Morrison (1995), graduates of women's colleges are more likely to attend graduate school, major in non-traditional fields, possess higher self-esteem and leadership skills, and achieve success in their adult lives. In 1985, 40% of all women presidents at all institutions within higher education were graduates of women's colleges (Touchton et al., 1993, p. 11). Rice and Hemming (1988) reported a "positive relationship between graduating from a women's college and high career accomplishment" (p. 229). They go on to say that "there seems little question that an environment in which many women teachers and mentors provide traditional and nontraditional examples of achievement is an advantage to young women" (p. 232).

All three former presidents received fellowships for their doctorates. According to the literature, many institutions of higher education have recognized that leadership potential in individuals must be nurtured and nourished (Ard, 1994). Therefore, a growing number of fellowships, mentorships, conferences, and other leadership programs promotes the advancement of women and prepares them to assume administrative positions (Anderson, 1986; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). The women in this study had opportunities to learn the institutional culture and to interact with those in leadership positions through institution-sponsored fellowships and internships. These in-house opportunities provided opportunities to participate in the daily activities of leadership. According to the literature, fellowships and internship programs are the most comprehensive commitment higher education institutions can contribute to the leadership development of faculty and staff. Ard (1994) asserted, "Internships provide new, challenging temporary positions from which employees can gain new insights, skills, and perspectives related to their jobs and to leadership" (p. 11).

FP1 and FP2 majored in English in undergraduate school, whereas FP3 majored in sociology. FP1 holds a master's degree in English and a doctorate in educational administration. FP2 has a master's in Sociology, with additional coursework in education, and holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction/higher education. FP3 holds a master's in education and a doctorate in higher education administration. According to Moore (1988), degrees in higher education or educational administration have sometimes been disparaged as not sufficiently academic, yet the numbers are growing. She reported that women, minorities, and those in two-year colleges predominately hold education doctorates. In fact, the two-year college sector is notable for having requested and designed doctoral programs to meet their growing need for administrators (Moore, Twombly, & Martorana, 1985).

While in college, the former presidents participated in nonacademic activities. FP1 continued to write a column for the local newspaper each summer, FP2 worked full time during college and attended school part time, and FP3 wrote for the newspaper and was involved in student government. In addition, FP3 served as chairman of the United Way Campaign. All three women demonstrated a pattern of considerable involvement throughout their school careers, setting the stage for managing a wide range of interests and activities as adults.

Marriage and Family

Two of the three former presidents were married, and the other one has never been married. These women talked about the influence their personal lives had on their careers. Two of the three indicated that juggling marriage and family was a challenge but nevertheless a blessing. The demands were intense and challenging but made for a very rewarding experience.

FP1 was married for just a few years to her high school sweetheart and then they divorced. She remarried and both she and her second husband, to whom she has been married for nearly 25 years, went through the doctoral program together. FP1 has one son by her first husband and one son by her second husband. FP1 felt that her second husband was instrumental in her success.

FP2 got married while she was pursuing her bachelor's degree. She and her husband decided to have a child, after which she returned to college to complete her master's degree, leaving her daughter and husband at home during her matriculation period.

FP3 chose to remain single, concentrating instead on her career and making contributions to education. According to Vaughan and Weisman (1997), 9% of female community college presidents are single and have never married.

The data from this study regarding marital status are consistent with the work of Vaughan and Weisman (1997), which revealed that 60% of female community college presidents are married. The two former presidents who were married also had one or more children, and they believed that being married and having children were important in their growth and development. According to these two former presidents, motherhood, the household planning, and household management were good preparation ground for higher education management, findings that are congruent with previous research (Helgesen, 1990; McGee 1979).

Career Path

The career path of the former presidents in this study, like findings from prior research (Warner, Brazzel, Allen, Bostick, & Marin, 1988), is one in which the most direct path to entry-level academic administration is teaching in an academic institution.

Two of the three participants followed the traditional career path to the presidency (Cohen & March, 1974; Moore, 1982, 1983), starting as lecturers/instructors, moving to assistant and associate professor positions, through various chairs and deanships to senior positions, and then finally to the presidency.

Unlike her two counterparts, FP3 had a non-traditional career path, starting her career as director of student activities, then dean of adult continuing education, and finally to vice president. She did not begin her career as a faculty member.

Barriers/Challenges

Each of these women shared her perceptions of the barriers that not only existed during her ascension to the community college presidency but the ones that even today continue to impede the movement of women into senior administrative positions. Though each of the women responded differently to these impediments, they each demonstrated innovativeness and resoluteness in overcoming these barriers.

While serving as an English instructor, FP1 experienced a barrier related to textbook selection. Specifically, the textbooks included no minority authors, which FP1 perceived as an impediment to her teaching effectiveness. Her solution to this barrier was to extend invitations to minority artists and poets to be guest speakers at the institution.

All three former presidents perceived social forces as barriers to the advancement of women into senior administrative positions. Each felt that socialization continues to impede the advancement of women into the presidency. Kanter (1993) argued that managerial promotion decisions are often based on who is perceived to be trustworthy, a question that is often a matter of who is perceived to be like oneself. Thus, if men continue to dominate the role of community college presidents and if boards of trustees continue to comprise predominantly white males, establishing oneself within the trusting boundaries of those who select the presidents of two-year institutions remains problematic for women aspiring to the top position. These three former presidents emphatically expressed their belief that an increase in the number of top female administrators can only be achieved through a fundamental change in the "attitudes" among trustee members regarding females and their administrative abilities. Featherman (1994) reported that the lack of women presidents in both community colleges and four-year institutions is partially attributable to latent bias against women and search committees seeking to hire someone within their own personal "comfort level"—a man.

According to FP3, the most significant challenge she faced in her career was proving that a woman could do the job. She felt that covert discrimination continues to exist. FP2 expressed a similar sentiment, indicating that women are expected to accomplish more that their male counterparts are. According to Vaughan (1989a), "a 'double standard' is applied to some female presidents, whereby they are expected to accomplish more than their male colleagues" (p. 25). Evidence of this prejudice can be found throughout the literature, in which women report that they must be more qualified than men in order to be considered for a position, particularly the presidency (Amey & Twombly, 1992; Cornelius, as cited in Buddemeier, 1998; Faulconer, 1995). These findings are indicative of sex-role stereotyping that has hindered women's career advancement.

One of the most shocking, yet enlightening, descriptions of barriers was shared by FP2. While working on the doctorate, FP2 was mistreated, misinformed, and misguided during every registration process. She graphically described that treatment as "student as nigger" situation. FP2 expressed disbelief that she could work for 8 years on obtaining her doctorate and, after those 8 years, "the dean did not even know [her] name." The experience made her even more determined to make a difference in the lives of others when she got in leadership by ensuring that students would not be treated in the same way.

Despite social and personal barriers, all of the women in this study advanced their own cause. They overcame setbacks and found alternative routes to success (Astin & Leland, 1991).

Role Models and Mentors

All of the former presidents indicated that they had mentors to nurture their careers. Mentors and support systems are important to career growth and development, and past research supports the influence that mentor relationships have on senior women administrators in community colleges and gives insight into the potential influences of mentors on female community college presidents (Moore, 1982; Twombly & Moore, 1987; Winship, 1991).

All three former presidents had mentors who encouraged them to strive for excellence and who encouraged them never to underestimate their potential. FP1 had a support system of colleagues who affirmed her intuitions and encouraged her to take on the interim presidency. FP3's mentors taught her how to be a professional and encouraged her to consider a career in higher education. Later in her career, FP3's mentors taught her how to be an effective administrator.

FP1's mother was an educator and served as an important early role model. She described her mother as "very principled and independent." She was particularly close to her grandfather, a railroad engineer, and described him as "the big male figure" in her life. She had opportunities to work with many people who assisted her through various challenges throughout her career path. FP1 has become an active mentor herself, creating a network of individuals who use her as a source of information and support.

FP2 had both male and female mentors who challenged her, and she described working for individuals she considered mentors who "demanded that things be done right." FP2 summed up her mentoring experiences by stating, "I would say that all of the mentors I have had were honest but very diplomatic. Their comments were always aimed at building up with positive criticism rather than tearing down self-esteem." FP2, an elected official, said that she constantly mentors, frequently speaking to 4th and 8th grade students, attending scout meetings, and trying to assist people in becoming comfortable with how government works and in how to get involved.

FP3 had mentors and role models throughout her life who influenced her pursuit of higher education administration. She understood the importance of mentors in her own life and career and felt it was important for her to take an active role in mentoring others in their career path. Interestingly, all of FP3's mentors were male. This finding is perhaps indicative of the time in which these women first started building their careers, a time when very few women were in the senior ranks, so they had to find men who were interested in women's career growth.

Other than the female mentor FP1 described as her best friend, all of her mentors were males. FP1 believed these men were not gender-biased. They not only recognized her skills and encouraged her talents but also provided her opportunities to broaden her horizons and expand her knowledge base.

FP2 had many mentors, both male and female. However, her first mentor was a male. His affirming messages about her skills and abilities proved very important to her career growth and development, because he encouraged her while she was still in high school to get a college education and to be career driven. All of her mentors were people with whom she could communicate about career choices and career development.

Oftentimes, mentors opened up doors of opportunity for these women. According to Cooper (1992), Winship (1992), and Despain (1991), mentoring is one of the influences that help women achieve the presidency. Most likely, two of the three women would have risen to the senior ranks without the assistance of their mentors because they had affirming influences very early in their lives. However, one of the respondents was clearly influenced by the advice of her mentor to further her education. The affirmation and confirmation from mentors and colleagues combined with access to opportunities provided by mentors expedited the process.

Sense of Self

The former presidents in this study described themselves as independent and achievement oriented, having been encouraged by their parents and others to succeed

(Astin & Leland, 1991). The values set out by family and associates encouraged education, and these women were bright and their teachers recognized them as special students. They are keenly aware of having had supportive family units who conveyed to them a sense of self-confidence. Each former president, in her own way, knew from family and teachers that she could do anything she set out to do. Andrews (1984) asserted that if an individual believes that he or she can perform competently, the results are usually positive. He also stated that "self-confidence affects the way women are perceived as well as the way they receive themselves" (p. 2).

All three former presidents expressed the desire to make a difference in all their career pursuits. This desire arose from strong, influential mothers who influenced their lives in a variety of ways. FP1's and FP3's mothers were well educated. Although FP2's mother was not well educated, she was a hard worker who set an example for her daughter. FP3's mother encouraged her and provided whatever support she could contribute. All three former presidents' mothers modeled independent behavior and the ability to survive the unknown.

The fathers of all three former presidents were supportive. FP1's father was ill most of her life, so she was very close to her grandfather and he doted on her. He encouraged her and valued her curiosity and intelligence. From his tutelage, she believed she could accomplish anything she set out to do. Though FP2's father worked away from home, he instilled in her a love of reading. FP2 said that he taught her to think critically and to discuss current issues, skills she thought were important to her later success. FP3's

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father was a banker who encouraged her and provided her with whatever she needed to excel.

All three families placed a high value on education and doing well in school. FP1's parents were both college educated. FP2's parents did not have the opportunity to attend college, but they encouraged her to pursue an education and to do well in school. FP3's family was not only well educated but also financed their children's education.

These three women can be described as risk takers, and their careers demonstrate to some degree an ability to adapt to change and to reach out to new experiences. All three respondents were and are committed to working in the community colleges. Because each woman wished to serve her community and was dedicated to offering opportunities to educationally and economically marginalized persons, each woman positioned herself well to move into a leadership position.

All three women are intellectually bright whose special academic talents were recognized early in their educational careers. They formed close professional relationships with professors in college and had opportunities for experiential learning. In many cases, their professors were instrumental in their receiving graduate fellowships. This sense of academic achievement, in addition to the strong family unit, gave them abundant self-confidence (Astin & Leland, 1991).

Leadership

Each of the former presidents was asked to define leadership. According to FP1, leadership is "the ability to not only influence others, but the ability to tap the inherent power and energy that lie in other people and to direct that energy toward a goal—toward a common goal." When asked how she would define leadership, FP2 said, "I think trying to be an example to other people, trying to treat people right, trying to have some sense of what can be for other people . . . in a positive way." FP2 indicated that, although she does not normally think about leadership or its definition, she says, "I . . . hope that I am one [a leader]." Finally, FP3 stated, "I think it [leadership] is an ability to provide a vision, to inspire confidence in others that they can do it. It's being able to motivate people to help you because you can't do it all."

Consistent with Birnbaum's (1989) work, all three of these former presidents viewed leadership from a traditional leadership orientation. They defined leadership as a process that emphasized behavioral roles, social power, and directive influence (Birnbaum, 1989). These former presidents also indicated a belief that "Leadership [is] a process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically toward a common goal or vision that will create change, transform institutions, and this improve the quality of life" (Astin & Leland, 1991, p. 8).

These women all mentioned the importance of having a vision. Each of these former presidents expressed a passion for making a difference, striving for excellence, and reaching for the next level. Though they may not have consciously set their sights on becoming a community college president, they all had a vision of becoming something better and the desire to strive and prepare for the next step. Research indicates that true leadership begins with a vision. According to Hesburgh (1988), "A leader needs a clear and challenging vision, a magic with words, the ability to motivate others, the courage to stay on course, and the persistence not to lose hope." These women exemplified the essence of true leadership.

Strategies for Success

The three former presidents described strategies they used during their career that may have contributed to their ascendancy to the presidency. Each one emphasized the crucial role of education in attaining success. One of the respondents referred to the doctorate as the "union card" necessary to achieve a senior academic administrative position. But the doctorate was more than just a "union card." Each woman grew professionally and intellectually through her graduate studies. FP2 articulated the importance of her doctorate:

> You may be the most skillful person in the world, but in the academic world, you have to have the credentials . . . getting my doctorate was a union card for me. I knew that if I wanted to stay in education, I had to have that union card.

In graduate school, these women gained self-confidence in their abilities as academic leaders. When they were dissatisfied with course offerings, they took control of their education by designing their own programs of study. They pushed the envelope and convinced professors they were capable of successfully completing advanced courses. FP3 stated, "you have to have a lot of self-confidence that you know what you're doing." Their critical thinking and powerful communication skills flourished. FP1 stated that having a vision and being able to articulate that vision was an important factor in her climb to the top. FP1 elaborated by saying that "strategic thinking, strategic planning, organization and basic management skills are also important skills to possess."

All three women indicated that academic preparation and experience were integral parts of their personal strategies to career advancement. Henning and Jardim's (1977) early study found that women often make career plans later in life than do men. As these women gained success in the early part of their careers, they began to see opportunities to move up to positions where they would have greater authority. All three of these former presidents were successful in their first attempt at a presidency (McGee, 1979). None of these women applied for these positions or learned about the opening through advertisements, rather they found out through networks of colleagues (Socolow, 1978). All of them were nominated for the position, generally by more than one associate. Two of the three were actually recruited to apply for the position. Taylor and Shavlik (1977) indicated that most positions are filled by internal networking despite protective legislation. Each former president indicated she had never planned to be a president. Yet when the opportunity arose, each one felt she was qualified to do the job and was confident in her abilities. In fact, one stated that she simply realized "I can do this. I can be a president."

Summary

During analysis, a number of themes and patterns further emerged from the data. These emergent themes are characteristics of the respondents, commitment to the community college, barriers/challenges, positioning oneself, finding the right fit, education—the key to success, and who influenced their decision-making process/mentors.

Emergent Themes

Characteristics of the Respondents

The literature review indicated that many external and internal factors contribute to an individual's career development. Among these factors are education, family upbringing, personality characteristics and traits, and one's perception of sex-roles. A complex interplay of interpersonal, family, sociocultural, and intrapersonal factors give shape to individual occupational choice. The review also suggested that achievers have strong personalities and are both assertive and self-confident. They possess a strong desire for achievement, autonomy, dominance, and status. These themes emerged from the data in this study and serve as indicators of how personality influences career choice. These themes are congruent with existing literature on individual career development.

All three of these women can be described as hard workers who were willing to go the extra mile if it benefited their students and their institutions. Hard work is also a means to an end. As the respondents recognized a desire to attain senior administrative positions, they worked diligently to achieve that goal. They consciously knew that by gaining breadth of experience and depth of knowledge they would be prepared to climb the next step on the academic administrative ladder. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1985) theorized that for maximum career development to occur, individuals must have sufficient opportunities to be exposed to a wide range of experience. Through hard work and determination, these women took control of both their careers and their professional destinies.

Much of this inclination to hard work is grounded in their desire to serve. Commitment to both the institution and the students was a common theme among the respondents. These women have a strong sense of self-worth and believe they have a meaningful purpose in life. They consciously chose careers in the community colleges because they were committed to occupational education and to ensuring their students' access to opportunities. They were fulfilled professionally at institutions that offered educational opportunities to persons oftentimes marginalized by society—persons who are either economically or academically disadvantaged. This finding is consistent with Holland's (1985) findings on personality and vocational choice. Choosing a career in an institution that serves others was an expression of each woman's personality. Gilligan (1982) and others found that women's sense of self is perceived in the context of connection with and responsiveness to others. These respondents believed that being a community college president included a connection to the lives of students. Their work as academic leaders in the community colleges was important because they believed it made a difference in people's lives.

Juxtaposed against this desire to serve is a highly competitive nature. The study's respondents are achievers who like to be in control and who enjoy competition. They do not shy away from conflict. This affinity for competition and desire for success aided their career development in the community college system, which is a hierarchical organization.

Apparently, their competitive nature did not hinder their ability to be cooperative and collaborative. These women possess a strong connection to others. In fact, their experiences indicate their ability to work well with people. Their connection to people drew them to careers in higher education. The data show they were able to work for the advancement of common good of others, especially their students. The woman one sees personally is the same woman one sees professionally.

Their propensity to work hard garnered the skills they needed for making appropriate career choices. These women are workaholics, whose sense of worth is connected to their work. Their competitive natures equipped them with the confidence they needed to survive in a hierarchical organization dominated by men. As past research has found, a woman must be self-confident and show high self-esteem to compete successfully and to achieve in a nontraditional profession (Betz & Fitgerald, 1987). These former presidents are an uncommon blend of nurturing, supportive characteristics often attributed to women and the no-nonsense, aggressive, competitive characteristics usually attributed to men.

Commitment to the Community Colleges

Grounded in their ethical beliefs and their desire to remain connected to people was a desire to serve. Over and over again, these women used the words "commitment" and "dedication." They chose careers in the community colleges because they were committed to the open-door access mission and because they wished to serve their students in better ways. The impetus for moving up the career ladder was to broaden their scope of impact. They wanted a bigger canvas on which to paint. When these women made the decision to move into leadership positions, they did so not because they were hungry for power, but because they wanted to serve their students in a much bigger way. Their commitment served as a catalyst for their career achievements.

Barriers

Institutional barriers based on gender stereotyping were issues for these former presidents in both their ascension to the presidency and while serving as president. The barriers were more internalized, arising from messages in the dominant culture that places women in the private domain before the public domain.

Without hesitation, all three participants expressed their belief that for women to advance to top administrative positions in greater numbers requires the boards of trustees to alter their questionable hiring practices, attitudes, behavior, and consciousness. According to Vaughan and Weisman (1997), "within the community college ranks, there has been a call by national associations, as well as state boards of trustees, to increase the percentage of women in top leadership positions" (p. 20). The governing board plays an important role in setting the moral tone of a college. The board's values affect institutional behaviors and the choices of the college faculty, staff members, and students. The leadership of the community college is charged with a public trust and must demonstrate trustworthiness through its actions to fulfill an institution's educational mission. According to Neff (1992), "a board that chooses only someone with whom it feels comfortable will probably choose someone similar to the board members. Opportunity and diversity suffer" (p. 173). Therefore, a community college board has a responsibility to the people in the community it serves not only to select the most qualified person—and one who represents greater diversity—but also to give the community a voice in how the president is chosen.

Accounts of questionable behavior on part of trustees make board ethics a vital topic for both trustees and presidents. Each instance of unethical behavior by trustees and boards weakens the moral fiber of the college community.

The former presidents in this study shared the perception that there are women who are qualified through academic preparation and experience to serve as community college presidents. They each related that more informed boards of trustees were contributing factors to the increase in numbers of women in senior-level positions in higher education.

Vaughan and Weisman (1997) revealed that the role of the board and its recruitment and selection process is the first step in achieving gender, racial, or ethnic diversity. According to Vaughan and Weisman, "current community college trustees tend to mirror the demographic characteristics of current community college presidents" (p. 111). They found that approximately 87% of the trustees are Caucasian and approximately 67% are male. The percentage of female and minority trustees has increased, rising from 15% women in 1969 to 33% in 1995. Though the composition of community college governing boards is becoming more diverse, when examining what factors inhibit boards from selecting female or minority presidents, findings from Vaughan and Weisman (1997) indicated that "community college boards are reluctant to hire women or minorities for fear that these candidates would not be accepted by the college community, especially if the staff, faculty, and students are predominantly

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the career development experiences of three female former presidents who were the first to have served in a southeastern community college system. In order to present more personal and historical information about these women, the author selected sociological multiple life history as the methodology for the study. Through in-depth interviews, the three former presidents shared their career development experiences and identified the factors and circumstances which influenced their pursuit of the presidency. Major findings were that a combination of family support, educational nurturing, the development of self-confidence and self-esteem, and the resilience to succeed despite impediments they encountered as adults were important influences in their career success. Especially important were mentoring and role modeling relationships because they helped the former presidents develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Barriers, such as gender stereotyping and the selection of sameness, were also found to inhibit women's access to senior leadership positions. Appendices include the interview protocol. Contains over 400 references. (JA)

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A. Ballentine

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by

ANGELA RENÉ BALLENTINE

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Charles and Audrey Ballentine, who instilled in me a passion for learning and taught me the value of perseverance, even when the odds are against you.

ABSTRACT

BALLENTINE, ANGELA RENÉ. A Sociological Multiple Life History Study of Three Female Former Community College Presidents in a Southeastern System. (Under the direction of James L. Burrow and Peter Hessling.)

A review of the literature revealed that the 1990s witnessed the largest increase in the numbers of female presidents of higher education institutions than in any decade in history. The literature has established a need to present more personal and historical information about women who have served as community college presidents. No recent qualitative study has presented the career development experiences of female former community college presidents. Nor has a life history approach been used to examine the factors and circumstances influencing female presidents' decision to seek the community college presidency. If women are to continue increasing their representation in senior leadership of higher education institutions, understanding the career development experiences of women who have served in that role is important.

This study's purpose was to examine the career development experiences of three female former presidents who were the first to have served in a southeastern community college system. The methodology selected for the study was sociological multiple life history. Through in-depth interviews, the three former presidents shared their self-perceptions of their career development experiences and identified the factors and circumstances that influenced their pursuit of the presidency.

The stories were presented in the participants' own words, so as to capture the essence of the narratives and to add continuity and cohesiveness to the retelling of their experiences. Data generated from the interviews revealed the following themes: the early

years, representing home, parents, and family; their college and university experiences; marriage and family relationships; career paths; role models and mentors; the development of a sense of self and values; their definitions of leadership; barriers they encountered; and their strategies for success.

Major findings were that a combination of family support, educational nurturing, the development of self-confidence and self-esteem, and the resilience to succeed despite impediments they encountered as adults were important influences in their career success. Especially important were mentoring and role modeling relationships because they helped the former presidents develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Barriers, such as gender stereotyping and the selection of sameness, were also found to inhibit women's access to senior leadership positions.

BIOGRAPHY

Angela René Ballentine, the daughter of Charles P. Ballentine and Audrey T. Ballentine, was born in Eden, North Carolina, on July 31, 1964. After completing high school in Rockingham County, North Carolina, she attended Greensboro College in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she graduated with a bachelor of science degree in biology. She then attended The Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital Radiologic Technology Program, Greensboro, North Carolina, where she became certified in Radiologic Technology.

Ms. Ballentine began her career as a radiographer, specializing in mammography. She worked as a mammography specialist in Houston, Texas, before starting her career in education as an instructor of radiography at Vance-Granville Community College in Henderson, North Carolina. Ms. Ballentine was promoted to assistant program director of the radiography program. She later received her master's of education degree in adult and community college education from North Carolina Sate University in Raleigh, North Carolina. While pursuing the master of education degree, she became the program director of radiography at Vance-Granville Community College.

She currently serves as the program director of the radiography program and the phlebotomy program while also serving as the chairperson of health education. As chairperson of health education, Ms. Ballentine manages several health education programs, including associate degree nursing, licensed practical nursing, medical assisting, radiography, phlebotomy, and human services technology with concentrations in substance abuse and mental health.

Ms. Ballentine is a graduate of the North Carolina Community College Leadership Program. She represented Vance-Granville Community College at the "Great Leaders Retreat " sponsored by the Department of Community Colleges.

She is currently enrolled in the doctoral program at North Carolina State University where she is completing an Ed.D. in higher education administration. Ms. Ballentine is single and currently resides in Raleigh, North Carolina.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES x

LIST OF FIGURES xi

INTRODUCTION 1
  Background 4
  Statement of the Problem 4
  Purpose of the Study 7
  Definition of Terms 8
  Assumptions and Limitations of the Study 9

LITERATURE REVIEW 11
  The Community College 11
    The Community College Mission 12
  The Community College President 17
  The Female Community College President 18
    Status of Female Community College Presidents 23
    Women Accessing the Presidency 26
      Legal Actions Affecting Access to the Presidency 28
      Barriers Affecting Access to the Presidency 29
      Social Forces Affecting Access to the Presidency 30
  Women and Career Advancement 32
    Academic Background 33
    Career Planning 38
    Career Paths 40
    Professional and Career Development 45
    Women and Career Influences 48
      Mentoring Defined 49
    Summary 55
  Career Development Theory 55
    Content Theories 58
    Process Theories 65
    Content and Process Theories 71
    Summary 76
  Women in Leadership Roles 77
    Gender Issues and Leadership 82
    Communication and Gender Issues 85
  Leadership Theory 86
    Feminist Theory of Leadership 87

Trait Theory of Leadership 89
Presidential Leadership Theory 92
Connective Leadership 95
Summary 97

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 98
Life History Interviewing 100
Participants 101
Research Design 101
Pilot Study 102
Data Collection and Analysis 102
Researcher's Role 106
Ethical Considerations 107
Validity and Reliability 108
Summary 114

RESULTS 115
Introduction 115
Portrayals 117
Former President One 117
Early Years 118
College and University 119
Marriage and Family 121
Career Path 122
Mentors 126
Strategies for Success 127
Sense of Self 128
Barriers 129
Closing Impressions 132
Former President Two 133
Early Years 133
College and University 135
Marriage and Family 136
Career Path 136
Mentors 138
Strategies for Success 140
Sense of Self 142
Barriers 144
Closing Impressions 145
Former President Three 146
Early Years 147
College and University 148
Career Path 149
Mentors 151

        Strategies for Success 152
        Sense of Self 154
        Barriers 154
        Closing Impressions 155
    Summary 156

DISCUSSION 157
    Early Years 157
    College and University 159
    Marriage and Family 161
    Career Path 162
    Barriers/Challenges 163
    Role Models and Mentors 165
    Sense of Self 167
    Leadership 169
    Strategies for Success 171
    Summary 172
    Emergent Themes 173
        Characteristics of the Respondents 173
        Commitment to the Community Colleges 175
        Barriers 176
        Positioning Oneself 178
        Finding the Right Fit 179
        Education 179
        Influences in the Decision-making Process 180
    Summary 182

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 183
    Conclusions and Implications for Practice 184
        Summary 190
    Recommendations for Further Research 191

REFERENCES 194

APPENDICES 234

    Appendix A: Letter and Consent Form 235
    Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Guide 238

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Traits and Skills of Successful Leaders 91

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Data Collection and Analysis 104

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Hexagonal model for defining the relations among Holland's personality types and environments and their interactions 62

2. Career development framework 75

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
but still, like dust, I'll rise.
—*Maya Angelou*

Throughout the 20th century, changes in women's roles in both education and society have been dramatic. Women's leadership representation and their roles in senior administration have also experienced unprecedented changes. These changes will create more opportunities for new leaders to be selected. Shakeshaft (1987) predicted that soon there will be more women than men in leadership positions in the American educational system. Vaughan (1990) predicted that "Indeed, if the present situation is any indication of the future, in the years ahead, more and more community college presidents will be women" (p. 234). These two scholars' predictions are correct, because more women than ever before hold presidencies of colleges and universities.

The 1990s have witnessed the largest increase in the numbers of female presidents of higher education institutions than in any decade in history. According to Buddemeier (1998), between 1992 and 1995, the percentage of women presidents of all higher education institutions grew from 12% to 16%. From 1984 to 1992, the percentage of women presidents grew only 2% (American Council on Education, Office of Women in Higher Education [ACE, OWHE], 1995). Similarly, the percentage of female community college presidents increased 7% over a 5-year period in the 1990s, from 10.8% in 1991 to 17.8% in 1996 (Vaughan, Mellander, & Bois, 1994; Vaughan & Weisman, 1997). These statistics reflect growth in the number of women in the community college presidency nationwide.

In the 1980s, the average percentage of female presidents of public community colleges was 10%, and the focal point of many studies was examining why women were attaining community college presidencies at lower rates than men were. Now, nearly 10 years later, more women than ever before are becoming community college presidents. A close examination of the career histories of those women who have served as community college presidents may assist women aspiring to the presidency to be better prepared to fulfill this important role. To determine where we are going, we have to know where we have been.

The literature suggests that female community college presidents do not have a long history. The need to use the past to inform the present is well established in the literature. As we embark on the 21st century, understanding the career development experiences and the self-perceived experiences of the women who have sought and gained entry to the presidency is important if women are to continue increasing their representation in senior leadership of higher education institutions.

In this study, I examined the career histories of three female former community college presidents in a southeastern community college system. I employed the sociological multiple life history method of qualitative research to capture the essence of the participants' career development experiences, with respect to their ascendancy to the presidency, and to identify the factors and circumstances that influenced their decision to seek the community college presidency. "The point of using qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states" (Patton, 1990, pp. 39-41). From the lives and experiences of these former community college presidents, stories will emerge detailing these women's unique career development experiences as community college presidents.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), "sociological life histories construct subjects' lives by emphasizing the role of organizations, crucial events, and significant others in shaping subjects' evolving definitions of self and their perspectives on life" (p. 65). When using the sociological multiple life history method, "human experiences are examined through case study interviewing using the person as a vehicle to understand basic aspects of human behavior or existing institutions rather than history" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 65). According to Hughes, "career refers to the various positions, stages, and ways of thinking people pass through in the course of their lives" (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 65). This sociological multiple life history study provides a reflective look at the career development experiences of these female former presidents and augments the literature on women in senior administration in general and primarily women in the community college presidency. Specifically, I examine background information related to female administrative representation in a southeastern community college system.

Background

In 1996, women were represented in a southeastern state's 58 community colleges by the following percentages: presidents, 3.4%; senior administrators, 28%; executives, administrators, and managers, 44% (North Carolina Community College System [NCCCS], 1995-1996). By 1999, the percentages of women in this system had risen to the following: presidents, 12.0%; senior administrators, 32.6%; executives, administrators, and managers, 49.3% (North Carolina Community College System, 1998-1999). These statistics reflect growth in the number of female administrators in the community college system being examined.

Statement of the Problem

Many studies have examined the career paths of women in top administrative positions in community colleges (e.g., Capozzoli, 1989; Faulconer, 1995; Hemming, 1982; Moore, 1983; Twombley, 1985). Other researchers have compared the career paths of male community college presidents to that of female community college presidents (Oglesby, 1993; Paul, Sweet, & Brigham, 1980; Winship, 1992; Winship & Amey, 1992). Researchers have studied women in higher education administration and their mentor relationships (Moore, 1982; Moore & Salimbene, 1981; Thomas, 1986). There have also been detailed studies of female community college presidents (Despain, 1991; Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993; Vaughan, 1989a). In addition to formal studies, many articles have been written about the challenges and barriers female presidents face in their career paths (Featherman, 1994; Leatherman, 1991, 1993; McMillen, 1986). Further review of these and other studies are found in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Although many of the aforementioned studies concerned women in top administrative positions in the community college, and several focused on female community college presidents, no recent qualitative study has presented a portrait of the career development experiences of female community college presidents. No sociological life history approach has been used to acquire information about the factors and circumstances that influenced their decision to seek the community college presidency by examining their self-perceptions of their career development experiences

The existing data on women in chief executive positions in higher education administration have not provided insight or information into the women themselves who have attained community college presidencies. If the field of higher education is to present a complete and accurate accounting of its history, there should be adequate documentation of the experiences of women in this position. Edson (1988) summed up the need for documenting the experiences of women in higher education administration:

> The qualitative details of the lives of women suggest an alternative way of viewing issues in educational administration. Their stories give texture and color to the quantitative data most often relied on in other studies, as well as offer a way of identifying with individuals throughout the country who seek administrative jobs and who wrestle with the demands of the work one employs. (p. 3)

As more women aspire to higher education administrative positions, more personal and historical information is needed about women who have held the chief executive position of the community college presidency. Moreover, as greater numbers of women pursue senior administrative careers in higher education, they can benefit from more knowledge of how an aspiring professional develops a career as an administrator in general and as a senior-ranking official such as the president in particular.

Through the stories these three female former community college presidents shared, a better understanding of the significant challenges and barriers these women faced and overcame was revealed. When I reflect on the women who have served before, those who are currently serving, and those who aspire to serve as community college presidents, I think of Maya Angelou's poem "And Still I Rise" (see quotes at the beginning of the chapters).

Societal stereotypes have been a barrier to women's career advancement, in general, and to women in higher education administration, specifically. Coursen and Mazzarella (1981) concluded:

> Instead of looking at women administrators as individuals, the system draws the same conclusions about all women: that their home responsibilities keep them from doing well in administration, that they don't want demanding jobs, that they are too emotional and that they have to stop work to have babies. (p. 42)

Most myths, assumptions, and stereotypical statements about women have been presented and received as facts. According to Chideya (1995), "as much as facts can be manipulated, facts are also a powerful way to destroy stereotypes. . . . Facts empower us (p. 5). In 1988, Green (as cited in Peterson, 1992) defined the stance that all educators must take to set the record straight:

> We who are in education cannot know, cannot truly know how it was, how it is. But we can attend to some of the voices, some of the stories. And as we do so, our perspectives on the meaning of freedom and the possibility of freedom in this country may particularize and expand. (p. 10)

This study was designed to attend to some of the voices by portraying, through detailed, thick descriptions, the career development experiences of three women who sought and gained entry into the community college presidency. These three women were the first women to have served as community college presidents in this southeastern state.

These former community college presidents' voices are important to the literature of women in higher education administration. They represent a missing voice. "The missing piece of the puzzle is that no one talked to these women [college presidents] about their lives, their work experiences or their career aspirations. People assumed women lack such aspirations, and nothing could be more misleading" (Edson, 1988, p. 1).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to tell the stories of all three female former community college presidents in a southeastern community college system to present a written portrait of their career development experiences, with respect to their ascendency to the presidency. The study focused on identifying the factors and circumstances that influenced these women's decisions to seek the community college presidency by examining their self-perceptions of their career development experiences.

This study contributes to the existing literature on women in higher education administration in general and women in community college senior administration in particular. Specifically, this study's findings contribute to a better understanding of how traditional gender-based social roles influence career choice and aspirations. As well, this study contributes to the literature on women's experience in leadership roles.

This research should be of particular interest to women professionals embarking upon a career in higher education because the sociological multiple life histories of these three female former community college presidents reveal the collective and individual factors of success in the lives of such women. This knowledge may give female academics an increased understanding of the ways they use and construct knowledge and education to their own benefit and, perhaps, to their detriment.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined within the context of how they are used in this study:

1. *President*–"the chief officer of an organization . . . usually entrusted with the direction and administration of its policies" (Webster, 1983, p. 931). The term *president* will be used as an all-encompassing term to denote the chief executive officer of an institution or of a community college system (Buddemeier, 1998).

2. *Mentoring*–the interaction between a junior colleague (protégé) and a senior colleague (mentor who promotes the career and psychosocial development of the protégé) (Kram, 1986).

3. *Mentor*–an individual who guides, sponsors, advises, protects, and takes special interest in the protégé's development (Sands, Parson, & Duane, 1991).

4. *Higher education administration career*–refers to "a series of jobs involving tasks of governance and management that over time tend to have increasing responsibility, reward, and recognition" (Moore, 1994, p. 9).

5. *Community college*–this term will be used instead of junior or two-year college. As well, community college will be used throughout the study to refer only to public community colleges (Buddemeier, 1998).

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The techniques for collecting and analyzing data in a qualitative study are too labor intensive to examine every phenomenon of interest. The number of respondents must be limited and the research focused. The inquirer cannot study everything about the research setting nor is everything worthy of study (Powdermaker, 1966). Therefore, this study was limited to examining the career development of the three female former community college presidents in a southeastern community college system.

Another limitation of naturalistic inquiry is the study cannot be comparative nor can the results be used to predict or control. The research cannot serve as a comparative study of career development among female community college presidents in other regions or states of the United States or of other countries or provinces. Although the results of this study shed light on the career development of these women, the results cannot be used to predict career development of all women or all female community college presidents. Results may be transferred from one similar context to another, but the burden of truth lies with the transferer (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Finally, I am employed in the community college system; therefore, my beliefs and professional experiences, coupled with theories I garnered from the literature, created an informed position from which to conduct the research. Every effort was made to put aside personal biases or presuppositions.

A review of the literature on women's career choices revealed that the vocational interests of women are strongly influenced by traditional gender-role stereotypes. Therefore, the study of women's experiences as they sought and gained entry to the community college presidency necessitates the examination of career development and the influence of gender in career choices.

To obtain a firsthand accounting of the career development experiences of three women in the community college presidency, the research was guided by the following broad research question: What were the career development experiences and self-perceived influences on these women as they sought and gained entry into the community college presidency?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of the review was to promote a deeper understanding of women's professional achievement and the process of career development and to demonstrate the need for this study. After reviewing the literature, I decided to concentrate on three primary areas: (a) the structure of the community college system, with particular attention on women's leadership style and career paths taken to attain top academic administrative positions, (b) career development, with specific focus on women community college presidents and their access to the presidency, and finally (c) how role models and mentors influence women's occupational choice, administrative behavior, and career mobility.

The Community College

Community colleges are complex organizations within the schema of public education. According to Mitchell (1966), the community college is

> an educational institution dedicated primarily to the particular needs of a community or an area offering the freshmen and sophomore courses of a college of arts and sciences and/or the first or second year courses of a two-year technical institute of college grade . . . [as well as] a variety of occupational, vocational and avocational and recreational training courses.

These community college functions are carried out under the jurisdiction of a local board of trustees and the general administration of the Board of Higher Education.

In the years following World War II, a rapid shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy took place. With that change came the awareness that a different kind of education was needed. Although two-year colleges were already in existence, changes had to be made so that these institutions would meet the needs of the communities they served in better ways than ever before. In the 1950s, legislators in the southeastern state under study restructured the public two-year colleges, naming them community colleges, and changing the manner in which they were governed. Other changes in governance were made during the 1960s and 1970s.

The community college system in the southeastern state in this study celebrated its 25th anniversary in the late 1980s, recognizing that in its service, the system had emerged as one of the nation's largest community college networks. During its more than 35-year history, the system has educated millions of students and employed thousands of faculty and staff. Only time will tell what the future holds for this type of educational delivery system. However, if the past is an indicator, the future will be filled with much work to do in serving this state and its people.

The Community College Mission

Community college leaders pride themselves on reflecting the needs and values of the communities in which they are located, on being adaptable to the changing needs of that community (Levin, 1995), and on having the potential to reach and influence people whom other higher education institutions do not (Vaughan & Associates, 1992). These areas of pride are reflected in the colleges' mission statements. The use of the word *community* connotes a mission that provides success for all applicants, regardless of their age and ethnic background, and that devotes college resources toward partially meeting community needs (Bowyer, 1992). Community college missions endeavor to serve the public good through both their commitment to developing people to their fullest potential (Tatum, 1992) and their involvement in local economic development. These goals are addressed by providing an avenue for equal opportunity for a quality education at a reasonable cost (Neff, 1992; Roueche, Taber, & Roueche, 1995) and by adding occupational skills to society (Tatum, 1992). Vaughan (1992) described this approach to higher education as a shift from student as citizen to citizen as student.

With access, community service, and economic development identified as priorities, the community college is a unique entity in the broader educational system (Levin, 1996). This uniqueness translates into open-access policies for students, comprehensive curricula, and commitment to local service goals (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Roueche & Baker, 1987). The open-access policy results in student populations who differ from the traditional four-year college student populations. Community college students usually commute rather than reside at the school. Very often, they come to the school without strong academic preparation, many having never completed high school (Eaton, 1994). The majority of community college students are older than are traditional-aged college students, with the average age of community college students being in the mid-twenties. For community college students to be reentering academe to upgrade skills, to complete programs that had been started earlier in their lives, and to learn new sets of competencies are customary (Eaton, 1994). The students have more diverse backgrounds in culture, life experiences, and interests than do students in the university system and on average are from lower income families. A large percentage attend part time, many dropping in and out several times (Deegan, Tillery, & Associates, 1985).

The comprehensive curriculum, characteristic of the community college, has been described as a "smorgasbord" approach to higher education (McGrath & Spear, 1991). This smorgasbord approach reflects community colleges' aims of meeting the community's needs and their ability to respond quickly to adapt to these needs. Curriculum offerings in most colleges include credit programs, such as high school upgrading courses, vocational programs, liberal arts, and university transfer courses. There are also customized job training programs, contract learning programs with industry to provide specific skills upgrading, and general enrichment and avocational courses. Credentials offered range from one-day certificates and university transfer courses to two-year associate degrees (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Community colleges, however, are not without critics—those who feel the mission has stretched too far. Eaton (1994) argued that the collegiate purpose has been overshadowed by terminal occupational education, developmental and remedial education, and community service. Doucette and Roueche (1991) suggested community colleges are still striving for respect in a society that often gives only lip service to democratic ideals of access and egalitarianism, ideals that are part of these institutions' mission. Richardson, Fisk, and Okum (1983) concluded that the open-access policy has resulted in declining standards, demoralized faculties, and poorly served students as colleges level down the "norms of literacy." McGrath and Spear (1991) submitted community colleges are doing little to optimize individual potential by offering remediation rather than vigorous academic programs. Weis (1985) maintained that the community college approach to democratization of education is merely rhetoric: in reality these institutions serve to reinforce the class structure of American society. Brint and Karabel (1989) contended that community colleges reproduce social and economic inequality by offering terminal occupational education that focuses on participation rather than on achievement. Clark (1980) suggested community colleges serve a "cooling out" function, the process of lowering and rechanneling students' educational aspirations, serving to reinforce the stratification and inequity in society.

These critics' concerns focus on student outcomes. Another area of concern relates to community colleges' involvement in economic development (Bowyer, 1992). The same mission statements that espouse goals of promoting community college partnerships and economic development help to position these institutions for potential conflicts of interest between serving the students and serving the community. Community colleges are often involved in political and capitalistic environments through partnerships with business and industry, placing colleges on the edge of traditional views regarding education and service (Bowyer, 1992). As revenues decline and colleges seek new support systems, they are expected to

> rethink their own boundaries in light of the reality that other entities important to the colleges' well-being are rethinking theirs. It will require colleges to seriously consider the nature of and appropriate limits on the company they will keep in their new ventures. (Roueche, Taber, & Roueche, 1995, p. 368)

Thelin (1994) offered the idea of a shift in higher education from a commonwealth or community ethos toward a consumerism ethos. He was referring to universities, but the same shift may be evident in community colleges as they seek to develop partnerships with industry. Clowes and Levin (1994) believed there is strong evidence to suggest "mission drift" or a shift in community college mission that will have "potentially significant consequences for all of higher education" (p. 459). If the critics are correct, community college leadership approaches will need to be altered to ensure institutions are addressing issues and employing strategies that will advance them into the next generation of community colleges (Desjardins, 1996; Twombley, 1994) Currently, in community colleges, the majority student population is female (Eaton, 1994; Twombley, 1994), and almost half of the full-time faculty are women (Knopp, 1995; Townsend, 1992). Dziech (in Twombley, 1994) observed that, while on the surface community colleges have been good to women, they have not always been good enough to treat them equitably. Twombley (1994) concluded from her study of 174 articles discussing "women/gender in community/two-year colleges" (p. 441) that the community college attitude toward women continues to be ambivalent. Hughes, Frances, and Lombardo (1991) predicted demographic and workforce trends will necessitate that higher education leaders respond to certain issues. Among these issues are increased educational needs of women and minorities and increased participation by individuals over 35 years of age. These trends will have an impact on community colleges, because these are the people most likely to attend community colleges. Higher education leaders, including community college presidents, must look carefully at these trends if they hope to address these issues and manage their institutions adequately and creatively at the turn of the 21st century (Cohen & Brawer, 1994). Therefore, learning more about the career histories of the female former community college presidents in this study and the factors and circumstances that influenced their decision to seek the community college presidency should help community college leaders in recruiting and retaining female presidents. As well, this knowledge should help community college leaders in developing internships and other career development opportunities to train more women for senior positions in higher education administration.

The Community College President

"Attempting to understand the community college without understanding its most important leaders, is, at the risk of being accused of engaging in a bit of hyperbole, tantamount to trying to understand the American Revolution without studying Jefferson and Washington" (Vaughan, 1986, p. 9). In an effort to understand better the characteristics of two-year college presidents, Young, Rue, Massersmith, and Grammell (1981) surveyed chief executive officers at 1,218 colleges nationwide. This earlier profile of community college presidents reveals that 72.6% had been employed in higher education for 11 or more years. Drawing from interviews and survey data, Vaughan's (1986) findings revealed that the majority of community college presidents were white males who came from "blue collar" family backgrounds. As well, he noted that 45% of the presidents presided over colleges in their home states, alluding to the possibility that these presidents had "remained provincial in terms of their environment" (p. 15).

Vaughan's study also noted that 75% of the respondents had doctoral degrees, confirming the previous findings of Young and colleagues (1981).

Practitioners in the 1970s identified roles and responsibilities of community college presidents as managers, politicians, mentors, manipulators, and fiscal implementors. Greenfield (1978) described the "politics of joy" (p. 36) in being a college president. McClenney (1978) asserted the need for community college presidents to be managers. Sims (1978) forecasted the end of the "glory years" (pp. 20-24) of abundant funding and political clout for the community college and predicted the need for presidents to be shrewd money managers. Another practitioner propounded future community college presidents would have to be excellent communicators and marketing agents who could handle the diverse demands of special interest groups and emerging community social and economic issues (Bickford, 1978). Vaughan (1978) espoused the need for presidents to act as mentors for "setting the tone and pace . . . in maintaining the delicate balance between student needs and faculty/administrator needs and, at the same time, assuring that the college serves the needs of society in general" (p. 10). Vaughan portrayed the community college president as the college's role model for students, faculty, community citizens, and others with whom the chief executive officer comes into contact.

The Female Community College President

Female community college presidents do not have a long history. In fact, relative to other institutions of higher education, the public community college itself is new. According to Buddemeier (1998), Joilet Junior College, the first public community college, opened its doors after the turn of the century in 1901. "The late 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s were the 'boom years' for community colleges; some years saw community colleges opening at a rate of one per week" (Buddemeier, 1998, p. 13). Primarily, male presidents founded these colleges. In 1971, the majority of female college presidents were either nuns or presidents of private women's colleges (Chamberlain, 1988). Even though there were increases in the number of women in educational administration in the 1980s, the American Council on Education (1988) reported only 10% of college presidents were women. According to the American Council on Education (1995), in 1975, 5% (148 individuals) of all presidents in all institutions of higher education were women; of these women, 7% (11 individuals) were in community colleges.

Bernice Sandler, Director of the Project on the Status and Education of Women at the Association of American Colleges, was quoted in the December 10, 1973, issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as stating the following:

> Were it not for the magnificent Catholic sisters who run their own institutions, the number of women college presidents would be less than the number of whooping cranes. Women who are college presidents should be declared an endangered species. (as cited in Buddemeier, 1998)

In 1973, Alice J. Thurston, former Garland Junior College president, did an informal examination of the 1973 Junior College Directory and found five female presidents in community colleges; all other female presidents headed private two-year institutions (Thurston, 1975). The history of female community college presidents spans just over 20 years. Buddemeier (1998) asserted:

> These past 25 years, however, have seen a growth in the number of women in the community college presidency and changes in both the career paths leading to the community college presidency for women and the experiences of these women while in the presidency. (p. 14)

According to the American Council on Education (1995), community colleges took the lead in hiring women presidents when compared to other segments of higher education. The American Council on Education further stated that, of all women presidents in 1984, 25% (72 individuals) were in public community colleges (American Council on Education [ACE], 1995). "Since 1984, only private four-year institutions have had a greater percentage of female presidents than community colleges" (Touchton & Ingram, 1995, p. 4). The literature of the early 1980s indicates this fact was not a comfort to women in community college leadership. "In reality, the story of women in 'the people's college,' is an account of success and failure, of hope and despair" (Dziech, 1983, p. 55). According to Dziech, the community college relied on two ways to defend its inequities toward women at all levels within the college. Dziech's first assertion is that the community college propagates the idea of "you've come a long way, baby," in comparing current statistics to past decades. The second claim is that administrators compare the community college representation of women to public four-year institution's representation of women in administration where the inequities were even greater (Dziech, 1983).

Simultaneously, women's attitudes toward these barriers were changing. Hemming's (1982) study of female community college presidents in California cited evidence that female presidents during the 1970s often found that they were treated differently from male presidents but did not recognize the treatment as discrimination. The average female community college president in the early 1980s was "twice as likely to believe she had suffered discrimination on the basis of her sex" than were previous female community college presidents (Hemming, 1982, p. 4). Moreover, women and men were found to view discrimination differently. In 1983, Sandler explained, "Men see discrimination as overt, while women see it as silent, hidden, insidious" (as cited in Eaton, 1984, p. 95). Women of all educational levels and in all institutions were subject to these invisible hurdles. Shakeshaft (1987) reported that both overt and covert barriers of sex discrimination have severely hindered women's progress in attaining top positions in educational administration.

Touchton, Shavlik, and Davis (1993) surveyed a sample of female presidents from all institutions of higher education in 1985. Buddemeier (1998) asserted that "these research data contain a comprehensive selection of data concerning female presidents at public community colleges in the 1980s from which a general profile can be obtained" (p. 15). According to Touchton and colleagues (1993), of the female community college presidents who were surveyed, 80% were white, 78% were between ages 40-60 (average age not available), 54% were married, and 63% had children. At that time, 79% of female community college presidents held the doctorate.

According to Touchton and associates (1993), many female presidents in public community colleges during the early 1980s were attracted to the presidency because it became a goal as they moved up the administrative ladder (73%). They became candidates for their position most often by applying for the position without being nominated (46%) or by being nominated and accepting the nomination (27%). In addition, 41% were internal candidates for their position (Touchton et al., 1993).

The change in women's academic preparation in regard to their ascent into higher education is important to note. According to Long and Blanchard (1991), in 1969-70, men received 57% of the associate degrees awarded. By 1986-87, the figures had reversed, and women were awarded the majority (56%) of the associate degrees (Long & Blanchard, 1991). As cited in Buddemeier (1998), the U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (USDE, NCES) revealed that in 1992-93, women received 59% of all associate degrees awarded by institutions of higher education. The NCES further revealed that women surpassed the number of men receiving bachelor's degrees in 1981-82. In the academic year 1992-93, 54% of bachelor's degrees, 54% of master's degrees, and 38% of doctorates were awarded to women (USDE, NCES, as cited in Buddemeier, 1998). In the community college, specifically, women receive more degrees and are enrolled in larger numbers than are men (Long & Blanchard, 1991).

Just as there are more female students than male students in the community college system, there are also more full-time female faculty members (45%) in the community colleges than anywhere else in higher education (Townsend, 1995).

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Moreover, a higher percentage of female presidents is in the community college system than is in public four-year institutions. Therefore, "women teaching in a two-year school are more likely to have a female president than are women in four-year colleges and universities" (Townsend, p. 43). These findings seem to hold true except in the community college system that was examined in this dissertation. Interestingly, in this community college system, a woman was not appointed president of a community college until 22 years after the system began (52 years if one counts the very first public two-year college in the state). The number of women in faculty and administrative positions within a college affects female students while they are at the institution and also how they progress in their careers.

Status of Female Community College Presidents

More women than ever before are holding presidencies. More specifically, Vaughan, Mellander, and Blois (1994) suggested that the past 5 years have seen a faster rate of growth for women attaining community college presidencies than in any other period in history. According to Vaughan and colleagues (1994), in 1991, 10.8% of community college presidents were women. Buddemeier (1998) suggested that "the most recent study of community college presidents, from which specific information concerning female community college presidents can be gathered, is Vaughan and Weisman's (1997) nation-wide survey of all public community college presidents" (p. 10). These researchers found that 17.8% of all community college presidents were women—an increase of 7% over the past 5 years (as cited in Buddemeier, 1998).

The early 1980s and early 1990s showed slow growth in the number of female community college presidents. In 1984, women held 72 community college presidencies (8%) and in 1992 women held 106 presidencies (10%) (ACE, 1995). As a result, in the 8 years spanning 1984 to 1992, the percentage of women holding community college presidencies increased 2%. Between 1992 and 1995, the percentage of women presidents at all institutions of higher education grew from 12% to 16% (ACE, 1995). In 1995, women held 453 presidencies (16%) at all colleges and universities and 138 presidencies (15%) within the community college system (ACE, 1995).

The following statistical data were garnered from the study completed by Vaughan and Weisman in 1997. The average age of female community college presidents is 51; the average age at which women assume their first presidency is 46. Approximately 23% of all female community college presidents are minorities: 12% are African American, 7% are Hispanic, 3% are Asian American, and one female president is Native American (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997).

Sixty percent of female community college presidents are married. In addition, over 25% of female presidents are divorced and not remarried and 9% are single and have never married (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997).

Contrary to 20 years ago when no women held presidencies in California, Illinois, and Texas, 39% of current female community college presidents are located in these systems, the three largest community college systems in the nation. Vaughan and Weisman (1997) found that one-fourth of all female community college presidents are in California, 8% are in Illinois, and 6% are in Texas.

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According to Vaughan and Weisman (1997), the majority of current female community college presidents do not have long tenures in the presidency. Over 20% of female presidents have been president for 1 year or less, and 66% have been president for 5 years or less. Eighty percent of female presidents have held one community college presidency (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997).

In terms of education, Vaughan and Weisman (1997) reported that 38% of all female presidents have attended a community college at some time and 15% earned an associate's degree. Eighty-six percent of female community college presidents have earned the doctorate, and 12% have earned the master's as their highest degree. Most female community college presidents hold their highest degree in the field of higher education. Regarding teaching experience, 51% of female community college presidents have taught full time at a community college, and another 30% of female presidents have taught part time.

Female community college presidents' are likely to come from two-career families and their backgrounds are likely to include parents who have experience in higher education. Over 20% of both fathers and mothers of female community college presidents have earned a college degree (Vaughan & Weisman, 1997). These data are supportive of past research that indicated the mother's role might have a growing influence on her daughter's career choice (Vaughan, 1994). Other research supports this assumption. Mothers of female community college presidents were found to have served as early role models for career pursuit and achievement (Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993; Vaughan, 1994).

Similarly, Curry (1995) found that most influential persons in the careers of female community college presidents were the father, mother, and advisor or educator. The respondents in Curry's study identified the father as being the most influential in the female president's professional development. Parental support was recognized as influential in nearly all female community college presidents' lives, and the motivation to excel also grew out of paternal influence, usually from her father or father figure.

Women Accessing the Presidency

Women in education tend to access administrative positions through specialist positions, supervisory positions, and elementary school principalships (Ortiz, 1982; Stockard, 1984), whereas men are more likely to access directly from administrative training programs (Shakeshaft, 1987). Greenfield and Beam (1980) found that women also used the position of counselor to move into administration.

Women have been found to enter administration at a later age in life than men do (Gillett-Karam, 1988). Paddock (1981) found from her study that 49.1% of women administrators had taken maternity leave sometime during their careers, which might account for women's age variance to men in entering administration. In contrast to women, men seldom take leave, according to Paddock.

Referencing early access to the presidency, Vaughan (1989a) noted that "almost one-fourth of the presidents in 1960 came from public school administration and over 15 percent came from four-year institutions; by 1989, "almost 90 percent . . . came to the presidency from within the community college ranks" (pp. 1-2). Twombley (1988), researching the existence of internal labor markets in community colleges, reported that "routes to the presidency were quite clear" (p. 682). Presidents tended to access the presidency directly from the chief academic officer position. Twombley's study revealed the importance of the chief academic officer position as a step to the presidency, and this finding was substantiated in a later study by Vaughan (1990). Drawing from a national survey of the careers and lifestyles of deans of instruction in community colleges, Vaughan revealed the significance of holding an academic deanship for access to the community college presidency. He further implied that, because of the large number of women in deanships, the underrepresentation of women in CEO positions will be addressed by this seemingly direct "pathway" to the presidency. Opponents studying socialization into top administrative positions might imply otherwise, noting that individuals tend to select those with whom they can most easily relate (Restine, 1993). Because the majority of community college presidents and members of the board of trustees are white males, the perpetual dilemma of access continues to augment the realms of diversity and women/minority representation in community college presidencies (Desjardins, 1991; Gillett-Karam, Roueche, & Roueche, 1991).

Studies of community college women presidents reveal that formal and informal factors contribute to or hinder women's career advancement into the CEO position. More can be learned about how women reach the presidency by examining the impact that legal actions, barriers to access, and social forces have had on their ascendancy to the presidency.

Legal Actions Affecting Access to the Presidency

Women's progress in attaining administrative positions has become the focus of a growing body of literature and research. Pearson, Shavlik and Touchton (1989) asserted that "legal mandates have been a powerful force" in promoting "institutions to establish new policies and procedures, to open access to women" administrators, and to create a culture that may eventually "remedy inequalities" that now prevent "full and equitable participation of women" (p. 4). The authors cited several "laws, regulations, and executive orders" that have promoted women's presence and influence in higher education. Affirmative action heightened the expectations of women and minorities, and many believed that a new climate of opportunity would enhance women's career aspirations. Perhaps these expectations explain, in part, why so many female aspirants believe that affirmative action is helping some women. When asked if affirmative action played an important role in attaining the presidency, 54% of the women respondents in Vaughan's (1989a) study responded positively.

On the other hand, Adkinson argued (as cited in Edson, 1988), "Federal. action policies may have had a greater impact on women's aspirations than on institutions" (p. 169). Henning and Jardim (as cited in Edson, 1988) cautioned that "laws alone will not ensure that women who aspire to careers in management—and who have the potential to be effective managers—will necessarily succeed," and that "clearly much more needs to be done" (p. 170).

Legal actions, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Affirmative Action, Title IX, and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, have all impacted the movement of women into the workforce. As well, these actions have created an awareness of women's place in business and educational organizations.

Barriers Affecting Access to the Presidency

In educational administration, women are often found in positions created to provide advising, counseling, and programming to women and other minority group members or in affirmative action and equal opportunity positions (Pearson et al., 1989). These positions are not considered conducive to establishing a viable route to top administrative leadership. This finding seems to hold true also in community college positions.

Barriers to women's advancement, according to LeBlanc (1993), "are those factors which circumvent or inhibit their entry into jobs, occupations, and organizations" (p. 42). LeBlanc (1993) suggested that there are 11 barriers to advancement in higher education: "(a) self-esteem, (b) need for self-improvement, (c) limited external interactions, (d) motherhood/family/academe, (e) issues of loneliness, (f) limited political/business encounters, (g) academic vs. administration, (h) need for critical career path, (i) need for mentoring, (j) need for internal/external support systems (networking), and (k) ability to see the 'Big Picture' within the organization" (LeBlanc, 1993, pp. 44-49). LeBlanc (1993) asserted that greater attention be devoted to developing women's intrapersonal and interpersonal skills so that women can achieve upward mobility.

Johnsrud and Sagaria (1989) hypothesized that women in administrative positions would be "disadvantaged in the hierarchical outcomes (status, responsibility and salary) they receive as a result of their promotions" (p. 28). Findings of their study suggest women have equivalent educational backgrounds and significantly more experience when compared to males. Gender-based decisions may well result in job segregation within educational institutions. Although women are able to access a certain level of community college administration, there is concern about women's opportunities to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge affording them a greater opportunity for attaining the position of president.

Because of the sparse number of women holding the chief executive officer position, there is a lack of female mentors and role models. Training through mentoring is recognized as a viable preparation route to community college president positions (Merriam & Thomas, 1986; Vaughan, 1989a).

In a qualitative case study of mentoring in the career development of 20 male community college presidents, Merriam and Thomas (1986) found that mentors function in a variety of favorable ways—as models for desired adaptable behavior, as facilitators in gainful experiences, as providers for emotional support, and as guides who provided ways for proteges to become senior administrators. Their study's lack of women subjects presents a note of skepticism when referencing community college women presidents and mentoring.

Social Forces Affecting Access to the Presidency

Women still must contend with their own social orientation toward assuming a leadership role in our society. Gilligan (1982, 1993), Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), and Tannen (1994) asserted that women communicate and behave quite differently from men. With the workforce unaccustomed to the apparent difference in some leadership behaviors of women, this knowledge gap compounds the established stereotype that women are not strong enough to handle leadership positions. Established attitudes and beliefs are strong forces in society, and overcoming these firmly imbedded ideas can be an arduous challenge for women seeking leadership. Stereotypes are deeply imbedded in a culture (Schein, 1985) and create obstacles for individuals seeking roles outside society's classification. Studies of community college presidents report that women must overcome differences in expectations as a result of gender stereotypes when accessing the high-level position (Thomas, 1993) and that women have indicated a need to be "extremely well qualified" and "overprepared for their positions" (Shavlik & Touchton, 1988, p. 101).

In a study of 35 community college women presidents, Vaughan (1989a) noted the experiences these women had in accessing the chief executive officer position. One woman participant revealed that one of the questions posed to her in a presidential screening interview asked if a woman could be "strong enough to 'control' the faculty?" (p. 70). Other respondents in Vaughan's study noted stereotypical reactions to their size implied weakness, or to their female sex implied incompetence. Other women interviewing for presidential positions noted the wariness of board of trustee members regarding their female beliefs and the "demands" of family and children in prohibiting due attention to the job (Vaughan, 1989a).

Socialization continues to impede the advancement of women into the presidency. Kanter (1993) argued that managerial promotion decisions are often based on who is perceived to be trustworthy, a question that is often a matter of who is perceived to be like oneself. Thus, if men continue to dominate the role of community college president and if boards of trustees continue to be predominantly white male, establishing oneself within the trusting boundaries of those who select the presidents of these two-year institutions remains problematic for women aspiring to the top position.

Female administrators are engaged in a struggle not only to become college presidents themselves but also to preserve and expand opportunities for other women. This struggle demands their best efforts, as the vitality and future viability of educational institutions depend on their success.

Women and Career Advancement

Women have made important strides over the past 15 years in obtaining senior administrative positions in higher education, but these gains have not been equally distributed across all types of institutions. Many women have similar educational backgrounds to that of male administrators, yet they are "disproportionately represented in the lower levels of administrative positions" (Warner & DeFleur, 1993, p. 18). The number of challenges women face indicates that equal opportunity does not exist, and that women must actively seek out strategies and take the necessary risks for them to obtain leadership positions (Slimmer, 1984; Warner & DeFleur, 1993).

The literature revealed four key factors in career advancement: (a) academic background, (b) career planning, (c) career paths, and (d) professional development. These four factors are discussed in detail.

Academic Background

One of the most influential factors of whether an individual rises to a top position in higher education is his or her academic background and experience. Regardless of the type of degree, for women, the importance of obtaining a solid educational base cannot be stressed enough (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Any discussion of academic background should include information about where women were first educated. Research findings over the past 20 years show that women who attend women's colleges tend to be more successful in their careers than women who attend co-educational institutions (Buddemeier, 1998). In this dissertation, I asked questions of the three former presidents to elicit detailed information about their educational experiences (e.g., women's college).

A 1973 report by the Carnegie Commission stated that "women's colleges produced a disproportionate share of women leaders in American society" (as cited in Oates & Williamson, 1988, p. 195). "Thus the importance of the number of women faculty, in relation to the total faculty population and to the number of women students, emerges and reemerges as a major influence in the development of women students who subsequently become achievers" (as cited in Tidball, 1988, p. 218). Smith, Wolf, and Morrison (1995) reported that "graduates of women's colleges are more likely to attend graduate school, major in non-traditional fields, express higher levels of self-esteem and leadership skills, and be successful in their adult lives" (p. 246). In 1985, "40% of women presidents at all institutions within higher education were graduates of women's colleges" (Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993, p. 11). "Four percent of female community college presidents who responded to the 1985 survey graduated from women's colleges" (p. 11).

According to Rice and Hemming (1988), "there is a positive relationship between graduating from a woman's college and high career accomplishment" (p. 229). "There seems little question that an environment in which many women teachers and mentors provide traditional and nontraditional examples of achievement is an advantage to young women" (p. 232). Although women's colleges have been found to be influential in the career success of women, there are other more specific factors that help determine their career advancement. For example, the positions within the community college that one holds who is aspiring to a chief executive position has an important influence on whether one attains the top position.

The typical path for advancing from an entry-level position to an executive one is through the academic ranks (Anderson, 1993). However, McDade (1991) argued that one of the most persistent myths in higher education is that only those with a Ph.D. in an academic discipline can rise to top positions. She claimed that a doctorate in education is increasingly being substituted for the Ph.D. but asserts that the Ph.D. provides a more adequate foundation for the responsibilities associated with a leadership position.

Success in obtaining a chief executive position is highly dependent upon whether one's career path is in academic or non-academic administration. Degrees in areas such as higher education administration are seen by many in academia as lacking in providing the necessary academic background to succeed in positions of leadership in the academic sector but are significantly represented in non-academic areas of higher education administration (Warner & DeFleur, 1993).

According to Buddemeier (1998), even though many senior administrators have a doctorate in higher education administration, this credential does not seem to be the preferred one for academic leadership positions, except in community colleges. Women interested in securing an academic leadership role may be more likely to enhance their career possibilities by pursuing a degree in an academic field such as a liberal arts discipline (Townsend & Wiese, 1991).

Advancing one's career in higher education administration is influenced not only by one's educational background but also by his or her academic experience in collegiate teaching and research (Townsend & Wiese, 1991). Warner, Brazzel, Allen, Bostick, and Marin (1988) maintained that the most direct path to entry-level academic administration is teaching in an academic department, which also will determine where a person is likely to secure a leadership position. Warner and colleagues (1988) argued that individuals who have had faculty experience are significantly more likely to hold administrative positions at universities, whereas those without faculty experience are more likely to be working in colleges, community colleges, and technical schools.

Anderson (1993) argued that, along with teaching, the "importance of scholarship should not be underestimated" (p. 37) because scholarship reinforces one's credibility in an academic environment. Theodore (1986) claimed that whether or not an administrative appointment entails teaching and research responsibilities, a teaching and research background "usually constitutes qualification for such an appointment" (p. 59).

According to Flynn (1993), to advance to a top leadership position in higher education, one has to have academic experience. "To reach the top position in the academic world, one has to have been a faculty member, probably a department chair, possibly an associate dean, certainly a vice president, before there is any reasonable expectation of becoming a president" (Flynn, 1993, p. 118).

Becoming a chair of an academic department is a common entry point to administration, but it can also have a negative effect on women. Hirsch (1994b) saw the department chairmanship as a "double-edged sword" (p. 1) for women, because it offers women an "invaluable opportunity for administrative leadership" (p. 1) while, at the same time, increasing stress in the struggle to be "both an effective leader and a productive scholar" (p. 1).

Educational preparation and training for senior administration seem a necessity in today's complex educational institutions. In examining the training of women in community college presidencies, the literature revealed that women prepare for top administrative positions in a variety of ways. Scholars propose that persons aspiring to become top administrators "obtain a doctorate degree and get a mentor" (Vaughan, 1989a, p. 3). In support of Vaughan's advice, Gillett-Karam (1988) reported that the majority of the community college women presidents in her study had earned doctorate degrees. About 40% of the women in Gillett-Karam's study began their administrative experience as department heads or division chairpersons. Women were twice as likely as men were to have been employed in public school administration prior to attaining their top positions. Vaughan's (1986) study noted that the majority of community college presidents accessed the presidency through the dean of instruction or chief instructional officer (CIO) positions. Vaughan's study focused primarily on men. Female presidents access through a diversity of ways, such as teaching, other administrative positions, or taking risks (e.g., changing jobs and assuming difficult assignments) (Sanders & Hammons, 1990; Winship, 1992).

In contrast to earlier studies of chief executive officers, Sanders and Hammons (1990) reported that community college women presidents came from diverse backgrounds and indicated no strong socioeconomic classification. Some grew up in low socioeconomic environments and struggled to get a college education, whereas others came from affluent homes and attended elite, private colleges.

To promote the advancement of women into careers in leadership, a growing number of fellowships, mentorships, conferences, and other leadership programs sponsor women faculty and administrators to prepare them to assume primary administrative positions. The American Council on Education Fellows Program sponsors women and minority candidates who aspire toward top administrative positions (Green, 1984). Also, organizations such as the American Association of University Women sponsor conferences targeted at leadership topics. Scholars and practitioners in community college educational training programs have responded to the need for women's leadership through organizations and educational training programs. The American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges has nurtured the advancement of women in community college leadership by offering professional development activities; providing a job bank, a national journal and newsletter; and recognizing women leaders. The National Institute for Leadership Development (NILD) is another entity committed to national and international programs that targets women in community colleges for leadership training through its annual weeklong workshops. Supporting organizations to the NILD are the League for Innovation in the Community College and the American Association of Women in Community Colleges (AAWCC, 1994).

The Kellogg Foundation has been a major supporter of leadership training in community colleges since the early 1960s and continues to do so into the 1990s. The Academy for Community College Leadership Advancement, Innovation, and Modeling (ACCLAIM) at North Carolina State University had a fellowship program targeted at advancing leadership training for women and minorities (Gillett-Karam, 1994). Leadership 2000, a Kellogg grant to the League for Innovation and the University of Texas at Austin, focuses some awareness training on women's issues.

The literature suggests the importance of women being academically prepared to assume the college presidency. Career planning has also been identified as essential for women desiring to advance into top administrative positions.

Career Planning

The second factor central to career advancement is career planning. Hill and Ragland (1995) stated that, historically, women have had little control over their career paths, so they did very little planning or goal setting. According to Hirsch (1994a), the lack of career planning has been especially harmful to women in light of the barriers they face, such as family obligations, sex-role stereotyping, and sexual harassment. Hirsch also maintained that all women need to develop career plans and to be prepared to make job changes based on the assumption of an unstable job market.

Albino (1992) argued that the reason women have not planned their careers very well is that they simply do not know how:

> Women are not inclined to think about jobs or to set goals; women do not take risks or compete well; they are painfully conspicuous in non-supportive work environments; and they do not have mentors to help them change behaviors or deal with the work environment." (p. 49)

Although, in the past, women did not emphasize career planning to the same degree as did their male counterparts, that situation should change drastically because females represent "a critical mass in the work force" (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992, p. 217). By the year 2000, half of all workers will be women, and over 80% of females from ages 25 to 54 will be working (Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992).

More women are entertaining careers in higher education, and they are being forced to think about what it takes to be an administrator under what might be called "exclusionary circumstances" (Moore, 1990, p. 8). Ross and Green (1990) argued that in higher education there is an unwritten "code of career mobility" (p. 68) and, by understanding the organizational culture of the "academic marketplace" (p. 68), administrations can overcome potential barriers. Avila (1993) concurred, stating that women pursuing careers in education administration must "devise special strategies" (p. 54) in order to overcome internal and external barriers.

Sagaria and Dickens (1990) emphasized career planning because they claimed administrators are likely to stay at one institution:

> Regardless of what administrators plan or anticipate for their future work lives, prospects are very good that each will remain affiliated with a single organization. Therefore, thinking about a career in one institution is not only meaningful, but also imperative. (p. 19)

It is becoming increasingly important that women wishing to advance into leadership positions in higher education actively plan and develop both short- and long-term career paths for themselves. LeBlanc (1993) and McDade (1990) claimed that "anyone can develop a personal plan for career improvement by taking advantage of a wide range of professional development programs" (p. 47). Harter (1993) stated that women wishing to move into leadership roles must first learn to take themselves less seriously and have a sense of humor. Women should learn as much as possible about both the organizational dynamics and the culture of the institution in which they work, while, at the same time, retaining their own values (Harter, 1993).

Ausejo (1993) concluded that a woman cannot plan her career effectively without taking significant risks. Women need to contribute to their own success by "adopting career tactics that are carefully thought out and well timed" (Powell, 1993, p. 217).

Career Paths

The third factor central to career advancement of female college presidents is career paths. According to Twombly (1990), higher education administration is characterized by "ill-defined career paths, multiple entrance points, and lack of explicit criteria for determining mobility" (p. 17). Career paths in higher education are less defined than one would think (Ross & Green, 1990), and even the smallest institutions might have more than one "career system" (Moore & Twombly, 1990, p. 110), making it difficult for women to plan their career advancement.

Warner and DeFleur (1993) suggested that career paths in higher education for men and women are structured differently. For example, women are more likely to build their careers in one institution than are their male counterparts (Moore, 1982). On the basis of Sagaria and Johnsrud's (1989) findings that the predominant method women use to advance their careers is institutional position change, it would seem that there should be more women in top positions. However, as the literature indicates, this is not the case.

Women face more barriers in terms of career mobility than do their male counterparts, and Twale (1992) attributed part of the problem to the traditional formal college and university bureaucratic structure" (p. 6). According to the author, this structure is based on a hierarchical career ladder that allows movement only through "fixed positions and the securing of successive appointments with increasing levels of responsibility, authority, and salary" (p. 7). Twale concluded that this model is characteristic of the typical male career pathway and accounts for much of the underrepresentation of female top administrators.

Cohen and March (1974) formulated a career ladder consisting of five rungs. The rungs are faculty member, department chair, dean, provost, and president. A similar pathway has emerged for community college presidents, even though this career ladder was created with the four-year institutional president in mind.

The findings are consistent that the career path most likely to lead to a community college presidency is the pathway represented by academic affairs (Boggs, 1988; Green, 1988; Moore, 1988). A larger percentage of community college presidents come from this pathway than from any other. More specifically, research shows that the position most frequently held prior to the community college presidency is chief academic officer and the career lines to the presidency consist primarily of administrative positions within the community college (Moore, Twombly, & Martorana, 1985; Twombly, 1985, 1986; Vaughan, 1986).

Vaughan (1986, 1990) confirmed that moving through the academic pipeline to the position of dean of instruction or academic vice president improves one's chances of becoming president. Indeed, "the most traveled pathway on the way to the president's office is the one leading directly from the dean of instruction's office" (Vaughan, 1990, p. 42). Researchers from all segments of higher education have confirmed that, as with men, the positions women hold immediately before attaining the presidency are primarily academic, such as vice president for academic affairs, vice president for instruction, dean of instructional services, or assistant to the president in some capacity (Mancini, 1993; Oglesby, 1993; Taylor, 1981; Winship & Amey, 1992).

Twombly (1986) found that the positions of chief business officer and chief student affairs officer "appeared to be ceiling positions and neither were sources of presidents" (p. 33). Moreover, she reported that the case of chief student affairs officers "is of particular concern to the career advancement of women" because women are represented in higher numbers within student affairs than within academic affairs.

Student affairs no longer appears to be a "ceiling position" to the presidency, but it is far from the most frequently traveled pathway to the community college presidency. Vaughan and Weisman (1997) reported that twice as many women entered the presidency from the position of chief student affairs officer than did men. Knopp (1995) found that women administrators are still more likely to be employed in external affairs or student services than in academic, administrative, or executive areas.

Boggs (1988) found that women were limited in their search for a presidency by lack of mobility and asserted that probabilities for advancement for women should likely improve if the candidates were willing to move and if they sought line experience in instruction. Moore (1988) reported that women are able to build careers in administrative areas such as student personnel and financial aid but are underrepresented in areas such as academic affairs. Thus, research indicates that career mobility is somewhat more difficult for women wanting to attain the presidency because they are on the wrong pathway.

Although the academic deanship is most likely to lead to the community college presidency, there are many other routes as well. Twombly (1986) reported that women who are already community college presidents are more likely to be chosen president by another community college. This finding was confirmed by Vaughan and Weisman's (1997) study of community college governing boards, in which 75% of trustees reported that their first choice among equally qualified candidates from a variety of positions would be a president from another community college. Therefore, potential female community college presidents are at a disadvantage because women hold fewer presidencies and only 20% have held more than one presidency.

Vaughan and Weisman (1997) found that 50% of all women held the position of chief academic officer prior to attaining their first presidency, 12% were the chief student affairs officer, and 7% were the chief academic and student affairs officer. One-third of all female presidents were internal candidates at the college at which they assumed their first presidency, and one-third assumed their first presidency in the state in which they finished high school.

In her qualitative study of male and female community college presidents, Winship (1992) found that academic terminal degrees, career planning, and mentors were important formal experiences along the career paths of community college presidents. Differences between male and female community college presidents were found within these experiences. Men were more likely to have the professional goal of becoming a community college president before pursuing a doctorate, whereas women did not identify this goal until they completed the doctorate. Women were found to be more likely than men, however, to have a formalized career plan.

Evans (1985) maintained there is no clear career path for women in higher education and, because women must combine a number of roles, both professional and personal, there is a need for flexibility. D. B. Jones (1993) concurred with Evans, arguing that women are forced to assume multiple roles in terms of family responsibilities and work-related responsibilities, which contributes to a lack of career advancement. Jones concluded that colleges and universities must work to develop an atmosphere that is sensitive to the issues women face, and one that is "conducive to the development of women in leadership roles" (p. 54). Sederberg and Mueller (1992) agreed, stating that there is a need to develop a career advancement model for women that incorporates family and "life events" (p. 10) that women are likely to encounter during their careers. The authors argued that, as women move into higher education in greater numbers, opportunities for them to pursue careers in the field are potentially greater, which creates an even greater need to study the career paths of women.

Professional and Career Development

In addition to looking at the career paths of community college presidents, it is also important to address professional and career development strategies as the fourth factor central to career advancement of female presidents. Green (1988) asserted that leadership development in higher education administrators has been mainly an informal process and that leaders have risen through the ranks, learning administration as they go along.

In the wake of difficult times facing higher education, many institutions are searching for stronger and more visionary leadership. Administrators have looked to professional organizations and leadership training programs for guidance and assistance in their preparation for the presidency and for support once they are in the president's office. An organization known to nurture the advancement of women in community college leadership is the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges (AAWCJC). This organization offers professional development activities, publishes a newsletter and national journal, furnishes a job bank, and provides recognition for women leaders. Shavlik and Touchton (1983) reported a perceived relationship between leadership program participation and career movement, suggesting that these programs are effecting their desired outcomes. For example, female community college presidents participate in leadership development activities, such as Leaders for Change programs sponsored by AAWCJC (Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993). According to Green (1988), such structured opportunities can help to enhance a leader's "personal and intellectual growth" (p. 24).

Fife and Goodchild (1991) concurred with Green (1988), maintaining that structured leadership and professional development programs can help to develop the skills of potential administrators. The authors highlighted the vast array of leadership and professional development programs, unique to the United States, that are available to higher educational professionals and offer the following:

> These programs can substitute for the management and leadership training of higher education degrees while also building leadership competencies and skills over the entire career span. Because of the availability of these programs, U. S. college and university administrators are less locked into career tracks. They can both build unique specializations and acquire broad, interdisciplinary knowledge appropriate for growing responsibilities and roles. (Fife & Goodchild, 1991, p. 100)

Leadership programs and conferences in the 1990s continue to offer opportunities for women administrators to network and be matched with mentors. For example, many participants in Florida's Educational Leadership Enhancement Grant from 1993-94 (as cited in Buddemeier, 1998) reported that the program contributed to their advancement or promotion, and many others reported that the experience offered opportunity for networking, professional collaboration, and improved colleague relationships. Faulconer (1995) found that female community college administrators (including presidents) are likely to receive training that assists in their career development and in their present positions. Conference attendance and workshop participation were the most frequently reported types of training.

According to Anderson (1993), women need to seek opportunities for leadership outside one's immediate position or area of specialization. Seeking outside leadership opportunities does not mean attending only formal structured programs for professional development but, according to the author, women should "gain credible experience at the center of the institution through classroom teaching, service on curriculum committees, and involvement in issues of current concern such as community college transfers, articulation with four year colleges and universities, and grant writing" (p. 37). Anderson contended that women need to take advantage of opportunities that will give them an in-depth understanding of their current assignments as well as experiences in related areas that reflect the mission and values of the entire institution rather than just one particular division.

Winship (1992) found that having a support system or a confidant and being a member of service and professional organizations were important informal experiences on the pathway to the presidency. According to Davis and Astin (1990), "To the extent that women in academe are isolated and even alienated, networking and mentorship provide them with potential avenues for integration" (p. 69). Moreover, these types of training experiences and professional development opportunities help women get through or around the "old boys' network." Buddemeier (1998) asserted:

> This network is not a formal organization. The "old boys' network" is an informal system in which men, purposefully or not, keep women out of top-level positions by referring only men to advanced positions and by passing along information unofficially to other men and thereby exclude women" (p. 28)

McMillan (1986) reported that the role of higher education's leading national women's organizations, specifically the American Council on Education's Office of Women in Higher Education and the Association of American Colleges, is "going the old boys' network one better" (p. 16). Buddemeier (1998) contended that "if the network can't be broken or infiltrated, women must form their own networks" (p. 27). Women's networks were essential during the 1980s, as women were often excluded from popular men's organizations such as the Rotary Club.

A review of the literature revealed four central factors in the career advancement of female community college presidents. These four factors are academic background, career planning, career paths, and professional development. I examine women and career influences more fully by discussing how role models and mentors influence women's occupational choice, administrative behavior, and career mobility.

Women and Career Influences

Although much of the literature on female higher education administrators focuses on the negative factors that have prevented women from rising to the top, there is a much smaller base of literature on positive influences that help women advance their careers. Role models and mentors have been shown to have positive effects on women's occupational choice, administrative behavior, and career mobility.

Mentoring Defined

Since the Golden Age of Greece, the mentoring process has been viewed as an important and effective manner of preparing leaders by passing on knowledge and advice. The term is derived from Mentor, the name of a friend of Odysseus in the Greek legend *The Odyssey.* Many successful administrators in higher education have achieved their positions because someone older and wiser recognized their potential for leadership and encouraged them to develop that potential (Bower, 1993). This practice, known as mentoring, is considered to be an important tool for professional development of female leaders. The mentor–protégé relationship can be defined as a special type of relationship between two people based on mutual respect (Atterberry, 1985). Moore and Salimbene (1981) defined the mentoring relationship as a lasting and professionally centered relationship between two individuals, in which the more experienced individual, the mentor, advises and guides the career of the less experienced and typically younger protégé. A mentor supports, guides, and counsels another person to help him or her "navigate" the world of work (O'Leary & Mitchell, 1990, p. 66).

According to Buddemeier (1998), mentoring is not to be confused with role modeling. She asserted that "role modeling is a passive influence in which an aspiring administrator identifies a person who possesses the skills that he or she wishes to emulate" (p. 23). In role modeling, unlike mentoring, there is no need for direct interaction between the observer and the role model. Therefore, an individual's role model can be anyone he or she wishes, whereas a mentor must be someone with whom he or she can interact and communicate.

Mentoring is needed in all professions, but having a mentor to point out the right direction and provide advice is invaluable in higher education. Although women can be successful without a mentor, research has shown the positive effects to be a reduction of entrance time into administrative positions, assistance in self-visualization of administrative roles, and guidance in career preparation for administrative roles or positions (Luebkemann & Clemens, 1994). In other words, mentoring and role models can positively influence the occupation one chooses and obtains, the behavior once he or she has gained entry to the position, and his or her success in moving through the academic ranks.

The research concerning mentor relationships and influences on top women administrators within the community college gives insight into the potential influences of mentors on occupational choice, specifically the community college presidency. A national survey by the Pennsylvania State University Center for the Study of Higher Education (as cited in Buddemeier, 1998) found that 35% of women in the top eight administrative line positions at community colleges said that a mentor had assisted them in obtaining their current position. Capozzoli (1989) found that the majority of senior female community college administrators in her survey had mentors. She found the relationship with the mentor to be useful in women administrators' career planning and career choice. Canada's (1989) research sought to understand more fully the influence role models and mentor relationships have on career choice of women administrators in higher education. The results of her study suggest that more women administrators in higher education selected their careers as a result of having positive role models.

Mentors can be colleagues and supervisors who act as role models, consultants, and advisors for the protégé. In the role-model function, the mentor shows the protégé standards of behavior and professional activity. The protégé believes the mentor is a skilled performer who is worthy of imitation when dealing with conflict, interacting with colleagues, supervising employees, and balancing personal life with professional demands. As consultant and advisor, the mentor functions as teacher, providing information on the basis of his or her experience and knowledge. The mentee is shown the covert and overt political system, the standards of performance for the profession, and ways of maintaining a personal sense of self in relation to the work self (Schmidt & Wolfe, 1989).

One often associates behavior with attitudes, feelings, and beliefs. Therefore, a review of the literature about women's feelings as they relate to administrative leadership positions can best be expressed through Stokes (1984), who reported that approximately 60% of all women in educational administrative positions have a "powerless feeling" in their positions. For example, 74% felt ignored by their male counterparts during important discussions (even within their own areas of concern), and 81% felt that they were not consulted as frequently as were males. Vaughan (1983) reported that 75% of female deans felt that mentors were highly influential in their careers. The literature on the influence of mentoring on administrative behavior showed that mentoring can assist women in learning to accept power and responsibility and in teaching them to use these tools resourcefully.

According to Vardi (1980), career mobility "is a function of the interaction between organizational attributes (which establish the type of roles, the available channels, and the criteria for career movement) and the individual determinants (demographic characteristics as well as behavioral processes)" (p. 347). Moore (1982) contended that mentoring appears to be a "potent association for the advancement of individuals' careers" (p. 57). Moore added that simply having a mentor may explain why women have advanced to academic administration at all. As Hill and Ragland (1995) argued:

> Mentorships have the capacity to provide critical information that has been especially scarce in the orientation of women breaking ground in a new area or along a new path of a leadership role . . . . When the mentor supports, validates and reassures, the mentee's self-confidence is enhanced and her or his outlook is improved. (p. 74)

Cooper (1992) reported mentoring as one of the influences that helped women achieve the presidency of universities. Winship (1992) studied the career paths of 10 community college presidents and found that all emphasized the importance of mentors in career advancement. Despain (1991) studied and developed profiles of the women presidents of 63 community colleges, representing 73% of the population of women CEOs. He found that the average female community college president in 1991 was white, 48.6 years old, and married with two children, and had a doctorate in education and 12 years of higher education experience. He also reported the average female community college president at some time in her career had a male mentor.

An important part of helping women in and into leadership roles continues to be mentoring. "Mentoring and role modeling are proactive ways of promoting the success of minorities and women in leadership positions" (Deese & McKay, 1991, p. ii). Researchers contend that it is essential for women to have mentors to increase female representation at top-level positions within the community college (Hill & Ragland, 1995).

Bower (1993) argued that, for women in higher education administration, mentoring can help women "make it in a world not necessarily familiar or accommodating" (p. 91). She further stated that "in a world predominantly composed of, run by, and culturally designed for men, mentoring for women becomes a requirement rather than a nicety" (p. 91).

LeBlanc (1993) concurred with Bower, arguing that women need good mentors to build confidence and encourage professional growth. She maintained that "mentoring is critical in meeting a variety of needs for women in higher education administration and can positively impact and enhance their careers" (p. 48). Successful mentor relationships often result in people who fit in more quickly, earn higher salaries, and are generally happier with the progress of their careers (Hauter, 1993).

There is no question that women need good mentors to advance professionally, because mentors are critical in meeting a variety of women's needs (Flynn, 1993).

According to Flynn, women "need the indirect and resourceful guidance that mentoring provides" (p. 48).

The gender of the role model has also been shown to be important. Capozzoli (1989) found that women who obtained positions in higher education administration usually had mentors who were influential in advancing their careers and that their role models were often other women. Having a role model of the same sex has been found to be extremely important for women (Shakeshaft, 1989). This finding is consistent with that of Bennett and Shayner (1988), who argued that all administrators have an obligation to develop women's leadership potential, but women probably have a greater sense of responsibility and urgency to do so because of the values and expectations women bring to leadership positions. These authors felt that women have a moral obligation to assist in the development of their female peers, and that doing so would greatly increase the number of potential leaders in the workforce.

Cullen and Luna (1993) concluded that mentor relationships are not only beneficial to women but to the institution as well. According to the authors, mentoring "plays a vital role in future organizational growth, stability and leadership" (p. 135). The overwhelming number of articles and the common wisdom holds that mentoring is important in career advancement (Burke, McKeen, & McKenna, 1990; Cook, 1989; Fitt & Newton, 1981; Fitzpatrick, 1992; Henning & Jardim, 1977; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kanter, 1993; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Vaughan, 1990).

Summary

A review and synthesis of the literature related to female community college presidents revealed four factors that are central to a study of women community college presidents and career advancement. These factors, which are academic preparation, career planning, career paths, and professional development, demonstrate the importance of women developing a strong academic foundation, setting goals, and actively seeking strategies to obtain leadership positions. Further, a discussion of how role models and mentors influence occupational choice, administrative behavior, and career mobility has been presented. The literature also revealed the importance of mentoring in enhancing and influencing women's pursuit of top administrative positions and the community college presidency.

An exploration of career development theories is also important to the study of women and career advancement. These theories describe influences in career selection and the self-knowledge one should possess to make informed career decisions.

Career Development Theory

Career development theory has had a relatively short history. Reflecting on this, Isaacson and Brown (1993) commented that "the behavioural sciences," of which career development theory is a part, "are still in a developmental stage" (p. 20). Parsons (1909), credited as the founder of vocational guidance, identified three elements of career selection: self-knowledge, knowledge of the world of work, and "true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts" (p. 5).

Out of these beginnings, trait-and-factor theories that focused on the content of career choice, such as characteristics of the individual and the workplace, evolved. Developmental theories, which placed more emphasis on the stages and process of career development, followed later. More recently, theorists have focused on both content and process, including the interaction between these and the role of cognition in the process. Before exploring the field of career development, career and career development must be defined.

From the time of Parsons (1909), the terms *career, vocation,* and *occupation* have often been used synonymously (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). Traditional definitions restricted *career* to a professional work life that included advancement, and several researchers have proposed broadening this conceptual definition (e.g., Byrne & Beavers, 1991). The Department of Education and Science (1989) defined career as

> the variety of occupational roles which individuals will undertake throughout life. It includes: paid and self-employment; the different occupations which a person may have over the years and periods of unemployment; and unpaid occupations such as that of student, voluntary worker or parent. (p. 2)

The concept of career has expanded to include prevocational and postvocational activities, as in the definition Super proposed:

> the sequence of major positions occupied by a person throughout his preoccupational, occupational and postoccupational life; includes work related roles such as those of student, employee, and pensioner, together with

> complementary vocational, familial and civil roles. (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 1999, p. 3)

A more concise definition, that of Arthur, Hall, and Lawrence (1989), described career as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (p. 8), again emphasizing the central themes of work and time.

Collin and Watts (1996) discussed the need to focus on career as a subjective construction of the individual rather than something that is objective, and Herr (1992) emphasized that careers do not exist as jobs or occupations but rather are created by individuals. I concur with these more recent constructions of career, perceiving that people develop a career on the basis of their perceptions of, and attitudes toward, career.

These broader definitions of career draw attention to the concept of career development, which Brown and Brooks (1990) described as "for most people a lifelong process of getting ready to choose, choosing, and typically continuing to make choices from among the many occupations available in our society" (p. xvii). Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951), who proposed that occupational choice is a developmental process occurring over a number of years, were first to advance the concept of career development. Their original theory, which assumed that the process was completed in early adulthood, was later revised to recognize occupational choice as a lifelong process of decision making (Ginzberg, 1972, 1984). More recently, Pryor (1985) described career development as a series of continuous decisions about career choice. Wolfe and Kolb (1980) defined career development as follows:

> Career development involves one's whole life, not just occupation. As such, it concerns the whole person. . . . More than that, it concerns him or her in the ever-changing contexts of his or her life. The environmental pressures and constraints, the bonds that tie him or her to significant others, responsibilities to children and aging parents, the total structure of one's circumstances are also factors that must be understood and reckoned with. In these terms, career development and personal development converge. Self and circumstances—evolving, changing, unfolding in mutual interaction—constitute the focus and the drama of career development. (p. 10)

I favor this definition because it encompasses the individual, the environment, interaction, and change as the key elements of career development.

Career development theories have been categorized into two groups: content and process. The theories that focus on content include Trait-and Factor-Theory, Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice, Theory of Work Adjustment, Bordin's Psychodynamic Model of Career Choice, and Brown's Values-Based, Holistic Model. The theories that focus on process include the work of Ginzberg, Super, Tiedeman and O'Hara, Gottfredson, and Krumboltz.

Content Theories

A study of content theories takes one historically to the origins of career development theory and the work of Frank Parsons at the turn of the 20th century. In essence, theories of content "predict career choices from individual characteristics" (Minor, 1992, p. 14). According to Patton and McMahon (1999), "a study of theories focusing on content is important for two reasons: It introduces many of the key concepts essential to an understanding of career development, and it provides a historical overview of the evolution of this field of study" (p. 12).

The technology provided by the psychology of individual differences, such as inventories and psychological tests, paved the way for the development of what is the oldest and most widely used career development theory (Sharf, 1992), the trait-and-factor theory. Trait-and-factor theory is founded on the notion that individuals are different and their different capacities can be measured and related to occupations.

According to trait-and-factor theory, choosing an occupation means trying to match an individual to a job so that his or her needs will be met and his or her job performance will be satisfactory (Brown, 1990). "The terms *trait* and *factor* refer to the assessment of characteristics of the person and the job" (Sharf, 1992, p. 17). Traits are individual characteristics that can be measured through testing, and factors are characteristics required for successful job performance. Patton and McMahon (1999) asserted that traits were originally viewed as biologically based, and therefore unchanging, and were later viewed as learned and subject to change. The term *trait-and-factor* implies a matching between individuals and jobs: Career selection is seen to occur as a result of understanding the relationship between knowledge about self and knowledge about occupations (Chartrand, 1991). This process clearly reflects Parsons' (1909) concept of vocational guidance and in doing so establishes his place as the founder of what is known as trait-and-factor theory.

There are some assumptions in the trait-and-factor theory that invite criticism. For example, some critics question whether people actually use reasoning in all career choices and whether all people actually have a reasoned choice in relation to career (Roberts, 1977). Other assumptions that have also been questioned are whether occupational choice is a single event, whether single types of people are found in each type of job, or whether there is a single right goal for each career decision maker (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Isaacson and Brown (1993) claimed that trait-and-factor theory does not account for the broad range of individual differences in every occupational group.

Criticism has also been leveled at trait-and-factor theory for failing to "consider [adequately] and define the universe of variables that impinge on the occupational choice-making process and define causal relationships among traits and variables (such as socioeconomic status)" (Brown, 1990, p. 346). Zunker (1994) was critical of the failure to account for growth and change in traits, such as interests, values, aptitudes, achievements, and personality characteristics. Patton and McMahon (1999) concluded that "trait-and-factor theory is not a theory of career development but rather a collection of theories based on influences that contribute to career development" (p. 17).

Holland's theory of vocational choice was conceptualized as a trait-and-factor theory and "remains in the tradition of differential psychology" (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990, p. 47). Holland's work has been described as "simple and eminently practical" (Hackett, Lent, & Greenhaus, 1991 p. 9). Holland's (1966, 1973, 1985) theory illustrates a person–environment perspective and can be categorized as a person–environment fit approach. Underlying Holland's theory is the assumption that vocational interests are one aspect of personality and therefore a "description of an individual's vocational interests is also a description of the individual's personality" (Weinrach & Srebalus, 1990, p. 39). Weinrach and Srebalus (1990) described Holland's theory as "structural–interactive" because it links personality and job types.

Holland's theory described the career decision-maker in terms of six personality or interest types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional. Holland's type theory is represented diagrammatically by a hexagon showing the relationships between the personality or occupational types (Figure 1). Holland proposed that these personality types are related to needs and that an individual's type is indicative of his or her major needs. Holland (1992) claimed that "individuals seek out work environments that are compatible with their attitudes and values and that allow them to use their skills and abilities—a corollary of which is that people in similar jobs will have similar personalities" (p. 21). Behavior, according to Holland, is determined by interaction between the individual and the environment and determines factors such as job satisfaction, stability and achievement, educational choice, and personal competence and susceptibility to influence. These outcomes can all be predicted from a knowledge of personality types and environmental models (Holland, 1992). Although matching is central to Holland's approach, his attention to interaction places him among the person–environment fit theorists rather than among the trait-and-factor theorists (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

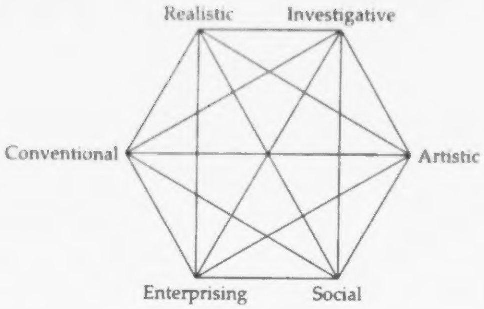

Figure 1. Hexagonal model for defining the relations among Holland's personality types and environments and their interactions (Patton & McMahon, 1999, p. 21).

Dawis and Lofquist's (1976) theory of work adjustment "provides a model of conceptualizing the interaction between individuals and work environments" (p. 55) and is "founded on four basic psychological concepts: ability, reinforcement value, satisfaction, and person–environment correspondence" (Dawis, 1984, p. 34). In essence, an individual exists in a dynamic relationship with his or her work environment, in which he or she seeks to develop a satisfactory relationship by making continual adjustments. However, according to Patton and McMahon (1999), the theory of work adjustment places greater emphasis on adjustment over time than does Holland's theory, and, in so doing, work adjustment theory more clearly establishes itself as a person–environment fit theory.

Bordin's (1990) psychodynamic model of career choice emphasizes the development of personality in relation to the role of work and play in an individual's life.

A basic tenet of the theory is that individuals seek enjoyment in work as in other areas of their lives. According to Patton and McMahon (1999), Bordin proposed that play is intrinsically satisfying and that the satisfaction of simply engaging in an activity distinguishes play from work.

In terms of career choice and satisfaction, Bordin (1990) described the evolution of personality as the mechanism that guides cognitive processes at times of career choice, whether those choices have presented themselves for external or internal reasons. Patton and McMahon (1999) described external reasons as those including particular stages of the education system. Internal reasons, according to Patton and McMahon (1999), include the desire for increased work satisfaction. In making choices, the individual conducts a self-assessment and gauges the probabilities of success based on intrinsic satisfaction, which may include "curiosity, precision, power, expressiveness, and concern with right and wrong and justice, as well as . . . nurturance" (Bordin, 1990, p. 114). Bordin's approach, according to Patton and McMahon (1999), is a significant move away from the tradition of matching approaches, with their emphasis on objectivity.

Brown's (1996) Values-based, Holistic Model of Career Choice acknowledges the concept of development and the broader context in which individuals exist. The first focus of his theory is on values and the role they play in career choice, and the second focus is on career counseling.

Brown (1995) claimed that individuals judge their own performance and that of others against a core set of beliefs or values that are important not only in the selection of life roles but also in the satisfaction derived from life roles (Brown & Crace, 1996).

Brown (1996) asserted that expected outcomes are the most important source of motivation in decision making and that values are the basis on which individuals decide which outcomes are more important than others; that is, "values form the basis for attributing work to situations and objects" (Brown & Crace, 1996, p. 212). He also claimed that "values have been the overlooked dimension in the counseling process as well as in the research that has been conducted on career development" (Brown, 1996, p. 368). Therefore, he has attempted to draw attention to the function of values in decision-making and career counseling and to set values in the broader context of life roles and life space.

Fundamental to Brown's (1996) model is the concept that each person develops a relatively small number of values that "dictate cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns" (p. 341). Brown believed that individuals are exposed to value-laden messages throughout their lives from a variety of sources, including family, friends, and the media. Values, therefore, "develop as a result of the interaction between inherited characteristics and experience" (Brown, 1996, p. 340).

The content theories presented in this discussion span the period from the early 1950s to the mid-1990s and reflect trends in conceptualizations of career theory. For example, early theories such as those of Parson and the early work of Holland are less dynamic because they pay less attention to the process of career development. Refinements of Holland's work and later theories reflect career development theorists' acceptance of the concept of development by the early 1970s.

Content theories, however, do not provide extensive explanations of the career development. This omission has paved the way for theories that focus on *process* in career development.

Process Theories

The 1950s were a time of change in the history of career theory, as researchers began advocating developmental theories, which view career choice as a developmental process rather than as a matching exercise. According to Patton and McMahon (1999), developmental theories do not compete with matching theories, rather the two groups complement each other. As Super (1992) stated, it is not valid to ask which group of theories is better, since neither is "sufficient without the other" (p. 59).

Developmental approaches take into account that career choice is not just a single static decision but rather a dynamic developmental process involving a series of decisions made over time (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Four theories are discussed to illustrate developmental approaches to career development: the work of Ginzberg and his colleagues (Ginzberg, 1972, 1984; Ginzberg et al., 1951); Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994); Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963), Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990); and Gottfredson (1981, 1996).

The work of Ginzberg and colleagues (1951) is historically significant in that it represents one of the earliest deviations from the existing static trait-and-factor theories and, as such, is a vital contribution to developmental theory. Ginzberg and colleagues' theory is the first to have focused on occupational choice from a developmental standpoint. Ginzberg and his colleagues (1951) proposed that career development begins in early childhood and progresses through three broad stages that conclude with career choice in early adulthood. During this time, many career decisions are made as the individual deals with preadolescence and adolescence. Ginzberg's theory identifies the three stages through which the individual passes: fantasy, tentative, and realistic stages. The tentative stage is comprised of the substages of interest, capacity, value, and transition, and the realistic stage is divided into substages of exploration, crystallization, and specification. The theory proposed that individuals have moved through these stages by the end of their late teens or early 20s (Ginzberg et al., 1951).

Ginzberg (1972, 1984) revised his original theory after conceding that career development does not conclude in early adulthood but rather is a lifelong process in which individuals continue to seek satisfaction from career decisions by improving "the fit between their changing career goals and the realities of the world of work" (Ginzberg, 1984, p. 180). His reformulated theory was sociopsychological rather than developmental, because he accounted for "reality factors," locating the individual at the center of the decision-making process as the "prime mover" or "principal actor" (Ginzberg, 1972, p. 175). The concept of person–environment fit is evident in this theory because the process of choice has now become dynamic rather than static, with ideas of lifelong career choice, work satisfaction, and adjustments to meet personal needs.

According to Patton and McMahon (1999), the work of Ginzberg and his colleagues has served as a major stimulus in the development of career theory. Further, Patton and McMahon asserted that Ginzberg's theory is significant as the first developmental theory and Ginzberg's (1972, 1984) revisions are significant for their ability to respond to changes in thinking about career development.

Although Ginzberg was a forerunner in the field of career development, the work of Super "encompasses the broader perspective of life span career development" (Patton & McMahon, 1999, p. 40). Super (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994) shifted the focus of career development away from approaches based on differential psychology, changed "the focus of vocational psychology from occupations to careers" (Savickas, 1994, p. 22) and provided "the main impetus to expand vocational guidance to encompass career counseling" (Savickas, 1994, p. 4). Super, therefore, made a major contribution to the field of career development both theoretically and practically.

Super's most lasting contribution to career development theory is his life-span, life-space approach, in which he not only presented a stage model of career development but also "constructed an overarching framework within which to explore career development" (Savickas, 1994, p. 22). Super's key concepts are contained in a list of 14 propositions that illustrate the breadth of his theory. These propositions draw upon components of career development "taken from developmental, differential, social, personality, and phenomenological psychology and held together by self-concept and learning theory" (Super, 1990, p. 1990).

The concept of self is central to Super's theory because the processing of the life-span, life-space information occurs within self. The terms *life span* and *life space* basically represent the content and process of career development.

Super (1980, 1990, 1992) identified five different vocational development stages that individuals pass through as they progress through their careers. These stages are growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline or disengagement. Each life stage is named to reflect "the nature of its principal life-stage task" (Super Savickas, & Super, 1996, p. 131). During the growth stage, the individual attends school, develops work habits, gains control over his or her life and becomes future oriented (Super et al., 1996). The exploratory stage is characterized by identification of interests, capacities, work-related self-image, and relationships between work and non-work activities. The third stage, establishment, focuses on an increased commitment to career, advancement, and growth and on stability in one's personal life. During this stage, the individual gains employment. During the maintenance stage, one holds on to accomplishments and maintains his or her self-concept. In the final stage, the decline or disengagement stage, an individual disengages from work and career and forms a new self-image, often planning for retirement and a reduction in workload.

Super's (1957) original theory was the first to address women's career issues. In acknowledging the central role of homemaking in women's lives and the related increase in numbers of women entering the workforce, he identified seven categories of women's career patterns. Even though these patterns have changed since their first formulation, they were important attempts to illustrate the relationship between work and family throughout women's lives.

Super's (as cited in Patton & McMahon, 1999) seven categories of women's career patterns were specific developmental stages through which an individual passed in formulating career decisions. He modified his theoretical formulation to suggest the notion of a "lifespace," in which the many varied roles that contribute to a broad notion of career could be acknowledged. Super (1992) maintained that career choice was essentially a decision based on self-concept, and no account was taken of differences between the sexes in the relationship between self-concept and work. Yet, as Perun and Bielby (1981) argued, "We cannot assume that the process of self-concept development . . . is identical for both sexes" (p. 248). Irrespective of the broad available roles for women that Super suggested, Fitzgerald and Weitzman (1992) emphasized that "traditional socialization processes do not prepare women for the complex nature of the choices they will make or the life roles they will face" (p. 135).

Super's model included many factors that influence career development. His constant revisions and open-mindedness on the breadth of career development made a lasting contribution to the field (Blustein, 1997; Herr, 1997; Savickas, 1997).

Tiedeman and O'Hara's (1963) view of career development as an ongoing process of differentiating ego identity reflected their choice of Erikson's (1959) psychosocial theory of ego identity as a basis for their career decision-making model (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990). Like Super (1953), they proposed a developmental model of stages through which individuals pass during their lifetime. Unlike Super, they placed greater emphasis on personal development. Critical to this self-development are biological, social, and situational factors. "Their [Tiedeman and O'Hara] decision making model is an attempt to help individuals bring to conscious awareness all of the factors inherent in making decisions so that they will be able to make choices based on full knowledge of themselves and appropriate external information" (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992, p. 56). The model assists the individual in understanding the "organization of self and environment" (Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedman, 1990, p. 316).

Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (1981, 1996) was "concerned with both the content of career aspirations and their course of development" (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 181). Like other process theories already discussed, this model assumed that "career choice is a developmental process beginning in childhood; occupational aspirations reflect people's efforts to implement their self-concepts; and satisfaction with career choice depends on how well that choice fits the self-concept" (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 181). Gottfredson's theory is similar to the person–environment fit theories and the concept that "people seek jobs compatible with their images of themselves" (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 546).

Gottfredson's (1981) model consisted of four stages. During these stages, individuals become more self-aware and narrow their occupational options by eliminating those that are no longer acceptable on the basis of factors such as gender and social class. This process is known as *circumscription. Compromise*, as defined by Gottfredson, is a process of vetting the preferred alternatives on the basis of "external reality" (Gottfredson, 1996, p. 195) or accessibility. Compromise refers to "obstacles or opportunities in the social or economic environment that affect one's chance of getting into a particular occupation" (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 548).

With respect to career choice, Gottfredson's model highlights the relevance of sex-role socialization of women and men, whereby individuals make decisions based on sex type of occupations and perceptions of opportunities and barriers. Gender type, as explained by Patton and McMahon (1999), influences career choice because individuals narrow their perceived appropriate occupational alternatives on the basis of societal notions of gender-appropriate careers.

There is considerable overlap among the process theories. The main contribution of this group of theories has been their concept of life-span career development. The most significant content influence in this group of theories is that of self-concept. Self-concept is closely linked with process influences because the career development process involves the implementation of self-concept (Betz, 1994). These theories also acknowledge the context in which career development takes place.

Content and Process Theories

Krumboltz and his colleagues formulated the first adaptation of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to the career field. The theory was first formulated in 1976 (Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1976), and a significant restatement was published in 1979 (Krumboltz, 1979). Krumboltz's learning theory of career decision making was one of the first to address both the content and process of career decision making.

The learning theory of career decision making seeks to explain how people become employed in the wide variety of available occupations. The learning theory extends trait-and-factor theory in its attempt to explain the process of person–job congruence. Patton and McMahon (1999) explained that

> the theory, which is based on learning principles, suggests that individuals learn about themselves, their preferences, and the world of work through direct and

> indirect experiences. They then take action based on these knowledge- and skill-based learnings. (p. 59)

According to Krumboltz, four categories of factors influence an individual's career decision-making process: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990).

Social learning theory is significant to the development of career theory because it recognizes the importance of a wide range of influences on career choice rather than focusing on a single influence (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Context is important in the social learning approach to career decision making because "the social learning theory of career decision making suggests that maximum career development of all individuals requires each individual to have the opportunity to be exposed to the widest array of learning experiences, regardless of race, gender or ethnic origin" (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, pp. 167-168).

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) was created to develop constructs and concepts to bridge differences and incomplete conceptualizations in existing theory. This theory was derived from Bandura's (1986) revised social cognitive career theory, Hackett and Betz's (1981) self-efficacy theory, and Krumboltz's (1979) learning theory. To update these theoretical formulations, the SCCT developers acknowledged the importance of learning experiences and the influence of genetic factors and environmental conditions on career decisions. Patton and McMahon (1999) stated:

> SCCT focuses more on the specific cognitive mediators that influence learning experiences in career decision-making behavior. . . . The theory focuses on how personal and environmental factors influence career decisions and . . . SCCT emphasizes that the individual is an active agent in these processes. (p. 62)

According to Patton and McMahon (1999), SCCT has three interlocking segmental processes: how career and academic interests develop, how career choices are made and enacted, and how performance outcomes are achieved. Lent, S. D. Brown, and Hackett (1994) described how three intricately related social cognitive variables (self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals) interact with an individual's traits, such as gender and ethnicity, relevant environment issues, and learning experiences. The individual is central to these three interlocking processes.

Fitzgerald, Fassinger, and Betz (1995) outlined ways in which SCCT can contribute to the career psychology of women: the importance of deliberately including a focus on contextual factors that are important for understanding the career development of women, people of color, working-class people, and others for whom existing frameworks offer less-than-satisfactory explanation (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

The individual is central to all theories, yet this concept has been dealt with differently. For example, some theories emphasize the importance of particular individual traits, such as values, personality, or interests, and much attention has been focused on the concept of self as an organizing concept. The major theories have used a number of terms to discuss the individual, such as self (Bordin, 1990; Miller-Tiedeman & Tiedeman, 1990), self-concept (Gottfredson, 1981; Super, 1953, 1957, 1990), vocational identity (Holland, 1985), and self-observation generalization (Mitchell & Kumboltz, 1990).

There are also career development models that relate specifically to influences in women's career choice and development. Some examples are Nieva and Guteck (1981), Astin (1984), and Betz and Fitzgerald (1987).

In varying ways commencing with Super (1957), much research has acknowledged a broad array of environmental influences in women's career choice and development. Nieva and Guteck (1981) distinguished between women's career preferences and their ultimate jobs, stressing that, although personality accounts for preferences, many demographic and economic variables account for the latter. This integration of individual and environmental influences in explaining career behavior was developed further in two theoretical models, Gottfredson (1981), as previously discussed, and Astin (1984).

Astin (1984) proposed a comprehensive theory to explain the career development of women and men. She believed her sociopsychological model could explain the occupational behavior of women and men, maintaining that "work motivation is the same for men and women, but they make different choices because their early socialization experiences and structural opportunities are different" (p. 118).

Astin's (1984) model incorporates four major constructs: motivation, work expectations, sex-role socialization, and the structure of opportunity. She proposed that an individual's motivation for work behavior is related to the need for survival and pleasure and the desire to make a societal contribution. Career choices are therefore related to accessibility of various occupations and the individual's expectation that these three needs will be met.

In their major review of the career psychology of women, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) identified four independent variables and five dependent variables that influence women's career choice (see Figure 2). These authors believed theoretical models needed to focus specifically on women's issues so as not to neglect any important variables.

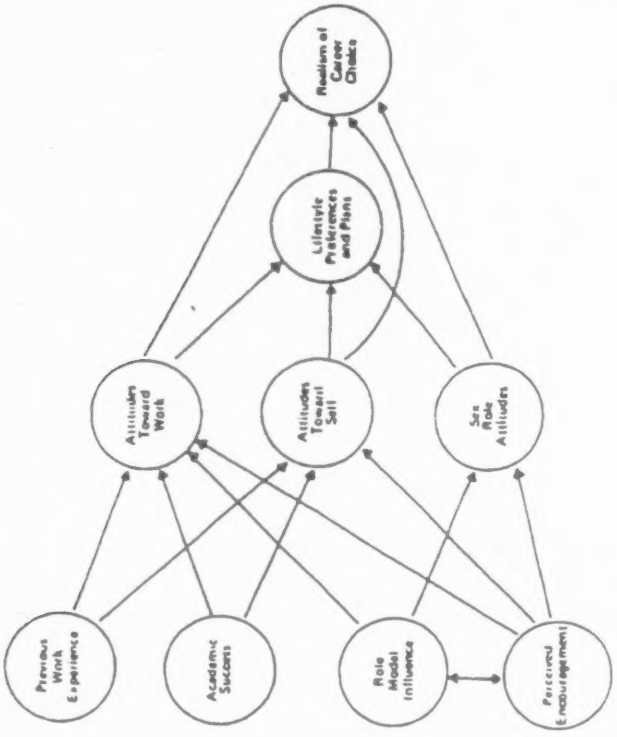
Realism of Career Choice
Lifestyle Preferences and Plans
Attitudes Toward Work
Attitudes Toward Self
Sex Role Attitudes
Previous Work Experience
Academic Success
Role Model Influence
Perceived Encouragement

Figure 2. Career development framework (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987, p. 144).

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Summary

This review of the literature related to career development has shown the breadth of the career development field. Lent and Hackett (1994) commented that "any truly comprehensive approach to career development should account for the complex connections between the person and his or her context, between intrapsychic and interpersonal mechanisms, and between volitional and nonvolitional influences on the career development process" (p. 78).

The major career development theories and their respective concepts have been identified and discussed from the perspectives of content and process and how these frameworks relate to and influence women's career choice. Since the days of Parsons (1909) and his concept of "true reasoning," career development, career choice, and career decision making have been portrayed as rational, logical processes based on objective information. However, more recent theorists are drawing attention to influences other than logical thought processes that influence career development, choice, and decision making. Lent and Hackett (1994) posited that "people's career trajectories are not just the result of their cognitive activity" (p. 77). They cited emotional reactions, achievement histories, social and economic conditions, culture, gender, genetic endowment, social context, and unexpected life events as influences that "may interact with or supersede the effects of career-related cognitions" (p. 78).

The review of the literature also identified the individual and his or her ability to understand himself or herself as a recurring theme in the career theory literature—that is, the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity of individuals whose career behavior the theories are attempting to explain and predict. Fitzgerald, Fassinger, and Betts (1995) noted that "as we go into our separateness, our individuality, into that which makes us different, we will learn more about our commonalities as well" (p. 102). The literature revealed that women's career choices and decision making are influenced in various ways.

Women in Leadership Roles

Mankind has had a longstanding infatuation with what contributes to the success or failure of individuals in leadership roles. Historians have reviewed the behaviors of Mongolian khans, Egyptian emperors, Roman caesars, and European kings, critiquing the successes and failures of such individuals. Leadership qualities are noted in the early writings of the Greeks, and leadership qualities, such as justice, wisdom, counsel, and valor, were noted in the heroes of Homer's *Iliad*. Leadership is a universal phenomenon and extends throughout the realms of life, from parenthood, to military experience, to organizational experience.

History and research demonstrate women's capacity to function effectively in high leadership positions. In a portrait documenting the achievements of seven notable women leaders in American history, Nies (1977) illustrated the characteristics of female leadership by portraying Sarah Moore Grimke's commitment to values and beliefs, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's charismatic and persuasive political success, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's visionary mind, and Harriet Tubman's strength in venturing into ongoing risks to pursue aspirations for her people. Twentieth-century examples of successful women in leadership can be seen through the motivation of Eleanor Roosevelt, the power and influence of Margaret Thatcher, and the sensitivity and commitment of Mother Theresa.

Although the research demonstrates women's capacity to function effectively in higher leadership positions, the literature reveals a paucity of women in senior leadership positions and gives three principal reasons for the absence of women in formal leadership roles. Gender-related differences between male and female leaders are also discussed.

One of the three principle reasons identified in the research for the absence of women in formal leadership roles is that women lack attributes necessary to be leaders (Haslett, Geis, & Carter, 1992). A second commonly cited reason is that women have not been socialized for positions of authority and influence (Rosener, 1995). The third rationale argues that organizational barriers inhibit women from advancing to senior leadership positions (Kanter, 1993).

Haslett and colleagues (1992) reported that traditionally women were not thought to possess the necessary leadership attributes. Women were believed to be compliant, submissive, emotional, and poor decision makers. To advance their careers, women were encouraged to imitate men's style of hierarchical leadership and to learn management skills that established clear lines of authority (Cannie, 1979; Harragan, 1977; Henning & Jardim, 1977). Paul, Sweet, and Brigham (1980) suggested that women examine the characteristics of males in top-status positions. If the path to the top is through a deanship, then the unique characteristics of male deans and presidents deserve attention and perhaps imitation by females who aspire to such positions. Recommendations to women are that they should not be themselves and that they should assume male behaviors in order to acquire leadership positions (Caplan, 1994). These types of recommendations lead women to experience a loss of identity, suggest sex blindness (Caplan, 1994), and promote gender discrimination (Wilson, 1995). These suggestions further support the notion that women should not be in leadership positions. Recent studies of gender differences related to personality traits and effective leadership do not support the traditional view that female equals difference equals deficient (Desjardins, 1989; Gilligan, 1982; Tannen, 1994). These studies, however, have not had a major impact on increasing the number of women in senior leadership positions.

A second rationale for the lack of women in management positions is found in the argument that women have not been socialized into assuming positions of authority and power and that societal stereotyping obscures women's potential as leaders (Wilson, 1995). The masculine stereotype, with its attributes of intelligence, dominance, rationality, and objectivity, implies competence, status, and authority. The feminine stereotype of emotionality, nurturance, accommodation, conformity, and deference, implies lesser competence, lower status, and no authority (Haslett et al., 1992). Although the notion of meritocracy is prevalent in higher education, perceptions, attitudes, and actions are still influenced, consciously or subconsciously, by traditional gender stereotypes (Wilson, 1995). Powell (1993) noted that the stereotype of the "good manager" as masculine has remained unchanged in America and women managers may have adopted a masculine style as a way of becoming a good manager. Kempner (1991) used the concept of "culture of professionalism," which includes socialization patterns, to investigate who chooses to enter educational administration. He found the "webs of significance that compose this culture are predominantly male oriented, based upon conceptions of control and authority drawn from the metaphors of business, the military, and athletics" (p. 119). Kempner surmised that individuals, most often women and minorities, who do not have these characteristics are less likely to succeed in securing administrative positions.

Those women who have succeeded in gaining positions of influence are often viewed as extraordinary performers, as exceptions to the rule (Pearson et al., 1989). The *super woman* explanation of success implies that women are responsible for their own lack of representativeness in leadership positions and that they need only to resocialize to fit into the male world (Shakeshaft, 1989). In this perspective, women must adapt to the norms rather than the norms changing to accommodate women.

A third argument explaining the lack of women in administrative positions focuses on organizational structures and the barriers or glass ceilings that keep women from attaining top leadership positions. Organizations often segment opportunity structures and job markets in ways that enable men to achieve positions of power and prestige more easily than women, reinforcing male-oriented value systems (Acker, 1990; Blackmore, 1989; Ferguson, 1984; Loden, 1985). In a 1992 study of women community college administrators in California, participants "overwhelmingly mentioned male attitudes and the presence of a 'good old boys network'" as factors inhibiting women's advancement in administration (Faulconer, 1995, p. 15). Kanter (1993) argued that women in large organizations are disadvantaged as a consequence of their structural placement, crowed in dead-end jobs at the bottom or exposed as tokens at the top, and that gender differences are due to structure rather than to characteristics of women and men as individuals. Ferguson (1984) viewed women's absence in leadership positions as a consequence of their discomfort in hierarchical structures. The emphasis on structural barriers reemphasizes the idea of women as victims, unlike the psychological and social psychological explanations, and focuses on institutional construction of policies and practices that hinder women's advancement. Because women have less access to organizational power through sex segregation of occupations and gender-biased perceptions, women are faced with paradoxical demands. They are expected to behave in gender-inappropriate ways to fit the male model of leadership, yet these same behaviors are negatively evaluated when practiced by women, which creates a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" dilemma (Haslett et al., 1992, p. 100).

During the 1990s there has been an increase in studies of women in leadership roles in higher education and business (Adams, 1995; Astin & Leland, 1991; Baker, 1996; Blackmore, 1991; Harnett, 1994; Haslett et al., 1992; Helgesen, 1990). Much of this work has indicated women manage differently than men do, discounting previous genderless studies that generalized findings from male subjects to all persons. Investigations focusing on gender differences suggest ways management theory can be modified to become more effective and more reflective of women's realities as leaders (Chliwniak, 1996; Desjardins, 1994; Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Gillett-Karam, 1989; Rosener, 1995).

Literature on female leadership at the onset of the women's movement advised women to behave in a way that mimicked successful men in leadership roles (Harragan, Caucasian." Another finding is the phenomenon of selection of sameness (or reproduction of self) manifested when boards choose candidates with the same characteristics as individuals conducting the selection.

According to Widmer (1987), boards must struggle with their own understanding of diversity before they can effectively make a commitment to diversity. If boards of trustees are to be better informed, they need to have clear ideas of their own biases, look beyond the selection of sameness, and concentrate more on eliciting appropriate information about the candidates experience, knowledge, and career aspirations.

Positioning Oneself

When asked to describe their career path to the presidency, the former presidents' answers unveiled different paths to the top of the academic ladder. Two of the respondents' careers were linear, starting as faculty and then stepping on every rung of the academic ladder described by Moore, Salimbene, Marlier, and Bragg (1993). The other respondent did not begin her pathway to the presidency by the traditional academic path of starting as an instructor.

Each of these women indicated that they never planned to seek the presidency. Nevertheless, the data show they were strategic planners who expertly crafted their careers by positioning themselves through gaining breadth of experience and depth of knowledge. They successfully competed for positions because they were the right persons for the job. Thus, these leaders' careers were not as serendipitous as they sometimes tried to project. FP1 quoted her mother as saying, "Luck is when preparation

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meets opportunity." Each of the respondents worked hard in addition to positioning herself well.

Finding the Right Fit

Ginzburg postulated in 1972 that people make career decisions by striving to optimize their satisfaction, and they do this by finding the best possible fit between their priorities and desires and their opportunities. Jenkins (1989) also argued that a good match between worker and job structure was important for career development. "People are more likely to select jobs that they perceive to be congruent with their job values and that offer the forms of satisfaction that they prefer" (Jenkins, 1989, p. 230). For the respondents in this study, positioning oneself for the next position was important, but finding the right fit was as important. Whether starting their career in the community college, or coming to the community college from the outside as in the case of FP3, all three women articulated their commitment to the type of education offered in the community colleges. These women were serving during the time when community colleges were opening at an astounding rate. There was a need to employ women as role models and as administrators. In addition, the college's mission matched each woman's values about the purpose of education. It was the right fit.

Education

The literature review demonstrated that, in terms of career development, the educational level one attains might be the most important career decision. The higher the educational level, the more diverse the occupational opportunities (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1985; Harmon, 1989). Without a doubt, obtaining the doctorate degree was one of the keys to success for the study's respondents. All three respondents have the doctorate. One of the respondents referred to the doctorate as the "union card" necessary for achieving a senior administrative position. These former presidents knew they needed the doctorate to continue up the ladder, so they worked hard to obtain the degree.

Influences in the Decision-making Process

A rich body of literature suggests that a senior colleague, the mentor, is important if not critical to helping a junior colleague, the protégé, establish a professional identity while learning the roles of organizational life (Kram, 1986; Levinson, 1978). Mentors affirm potential, enhance self-confidence and self-esteem, and encourage their proteges' professional development. The findings in this study illustrate how critical the presence of mentors was to the career development of these former presidents and demonstrate that these women benefited from mentoring relationships. All the women identified at least one person who was central to their career development and her career decision-making.

However, findings from my study contradict the feminist literature that implies women need a female mentor. Hall and Sandler (1983) and others have suggested that women need female mentors because women require relationships that foster mutual trust and increasing intimacy. In my study, the participants had mentor relationships with both men and women, and for the most part the male mentors were the more significant influences. The key ingredient in those relationships was that the relationship was not hierarchical. Instead, the relationships were more connected, in that the mentors promoted the psychosocial development of their protégés (Kram, 1986). The mentoring relationships of these former presidents significantly differed from the father-son relationships described by Levinson (1978) and Reich (1985). The mentors in my study (both male and female) affirmed their proteges' potential, encouraged their proteges to take risks, participated in conversations in which there was an open exchange of ideas, listened to their proteges, and helped them define career goals.

The participants were fortunate to have individuals who possessed the capacity to participate in a caring, intimate relationship that fostered their psychosocial development. Their mentors believed in these women and developed long-lasting relationships with them. FP3 told the story about a mentor who helped her access the community college system. FP1 still maintains close contact with many of her mentors and considers one of them her closest friend and ally. FP2 described one of her mentors as "the most intelligent but also the kindest and best person I have ever known."

Researchers have shown that the point of entry into an administrative career can be the most important factor in determining how high up the administrative ladder one can climb (Warner & DeFleur, 1993). For many of the respondents, having a mentor as they embarked upon an administrative career was essential to their subsequent career development. These mentors employed more traditional mentoring stratagems by opening up doors of opportunity and aiding in the climb up the hierarchy. Because they understood and recognized the importance of point of entry for an administrative career, they carefully assisted their proteges in defining a career path. Oftentimes, they were the same mentors who encouraged the psychosocial development of their proteges. Thus, they served dual roles—they opened doors of opportunity while encouraging the personal growth of their proteges. They positively influenced and enhanced their proteges' career.

All three women encountered strong influences toward education from their parents and family. The value of education was stressed, and, in fact, for two of the three participants, there was a predetermination that each of the women would attend college.

Summary

In the all-time literary great *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1960), the words of Atticus to his daughter Scout could very well have served as a preface to this study: "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (p. 60). And so these words can apply to the three former presidents in this study, the first of whom to serve this state.

The women portrayed in this study personify real leadership. They overcame resistance, shouldered weaknesses, and produced effective action with a tremendous sense of determination, accomplishment, and satisfaction. Their experiences reveal supportive and discriminatory practices. American history tells us that a prevalent general societal consensus had been that women should not be educated beyond what was appropriate to their different and inferior roles in society. The findings of this study depicted women who were always taught that education was the key to self-betterment. The stories revealed in this study depicted women whose early childhood experiences, role models, and mentors were instrumental in helping them to reach their career goals.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to tell the stories of three female former community college presidents and to present a portrait of their career development experiences, with respect to their ascendancy to the presidency. Using naturalistic inquiry, a methodology with it its roots in ethnography and phenomenology, provided me the tools necessary to indeed discover that all aspects of reality are interrelated. Understanding and recognizing these multiple realities led to a better understanding of the dynamic nature of human action in social settings. Because no phenomenon can be understood outside of the time and context in which it developed, the burden of applying the findings of this study to another context lies with the transferrer.

Qualitative data were gathered to elicit thick descriptions of these former presidents' perceptions of their career development experiences and to identify the factors and circumstances that influenced their decision to seek the community college presidency. The interviews provided a large volume of data about the factors that influenced their pursuit of the presidency. The qualitative format was useful for obtaining background detail and these women's recollections of family support and relationships that made a lasting impact on their lives and their success.

In this chapter, I have organized the information by discussing a specific finding then making recommendations for practice based on that conclusion. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

Several of the major findings in this study centered around the importance of role models and mentoring in the development of the professional self and the individual self.

Conclusion 1: Mentoring plays an important role in professional and personal development. All the former presidents in this study had at least one mentor who assisted in their professional development and helped them move up the administrative ladder by indirect support. These results raise the possibility of viewing mentors as organizational talent scouts and leadership developers. If colleges are committed to women's advancement, they must include mentoring programs in their staff development. Whether offering structured programs in which mentors seek out proteges, or making mentors available for women interested in connecting to someone as a career guide, women need good mentors. Colleges may need to identify and encourage specific individuals to get special training or experience, or they may devise various high-level administrative internships so that senior administrators can work closely and constructively with younger colleagues.

Leaders in institutions need to recognize that identifying and nurturing people with diverse backgrounds and experiences strengthen the institution just as it provides needed career opportunities for those individuals. Vital, dynamic leadership is necessary for colleges. As noted in the study, one basic purpose of developing and sequencing positions is so that training or socialization in one position will introduce the incumbent to the tasks of the next position. Thus, awareness of how positions can serve as appropriate training ground and how they may vary depending on the demands of the higher positions is essential to developing viable career routes to leadership positions. Much depends on a thoughtful examination of the career structures of any given college.

Interestingly, all the participants had a least one male mentor. This finding tends to contradict the feminist literature on cross-gender mentoring, because postulating that only women can be effective mentors for women is short-sighted. The implication, from this study's findings, is that both men and women can be effective mentors. Because men presently outnumber women in senior positions, women should not underestimate the valuable role men can play as mentors.

Also, these former presidents are currently serving as mentors for both women and men. Therefore, as more women in top leadership positions take on the challenge of mentoring, women will have a greater number of female mentors who can serve as role models and assist them in attaining senior administrative positions.

Closely related to findings on mentoring and role models was the importance of early childhood influences in developing self-esteem and providing a foundation for future success. Conclusion 2: Strong parental interaction and modeling are important career and personal influences. These women's families stressed to them the value of education as they progressed through school and as they made plans for college, which was a contributor to their involvement in and appreciation of education. Their families encouraged and expected them to excel. High expectations helped these former presidents develop a strong sense of self-confidence and belief in their own abilities, allowing them realize their full potential. These findings affirm the importance of family relationships in a child's development of a sense of self and imply that early childhood encouragement and motivation may produce inspired, achievement-oriented students. To ensure greater academic success, educational training institutions must provide prospective teachers with effective strategies for motivating all students, not just the intellectually bright student.

Conclusion 3: Education is foundational to career success. In this study, obtaining quality education, and particularly earning a doctorate, was fundamental in these leaders' success. Conventional wisdom indicates that to climb the academic ladder, women need to talk like an academician, think like an academician, and write like an academician. Through their graduate studies, these women honed their intellectual skills and proved themselves as critical thinkers and writers. Although graduate work may not be the only way to develop intellectually, the implication is that possessing a doctorate is viewed by many in higher education as a necessary credential for attaining a senior administrative position. As demonstrated by this study's findings, possessing the doctorate was an important step toward ensuring success in academic administration.

Conclusion 4: Educational nurturing from teachers and professors are important contributors to learning and sense of self. These women were encouraged to excel not only by their families but also their teachers and professors. These women developed exceptional relationships with their professors who mentored them and helped them develop greater self-confidence and self-esteem. These influences coupled with the women's natural abilities provided a foundation for success in school and college. The implication is that self-confidence and the ability to project a strong sense of self are central in achieving a senior position. Their career success, at all stages, depended on their poise and ability to articulate confidence in their own leadership abilities, and these qualities were nurtured by both family and educators. A point of concern for educators is what happens to the student who does not have the same support or innate abilities as the women in this study demonstrated.

Conclusion 5: College presidents are more likely to follow a traditional career path. The female former presidents in this study tended to follow the traditional career path to the presidency via the positions of teaching faculty, division chair, dean, and chief academic officer. Only one former president reported that she entered the presidency without holding a faculty position. This finding seems to affirm that the academic path is the most useful path to the presidency. An important note, however, is that these women were in the academic pipeline and were appropriately educated and ready for the presidency.

The three women in this study indicated that they became attracted to the presidency as they moved up the administrative ladder and that the next step on the administrative ladder for them happened to be the presidency. Many people, regardless of the field, progress in their careers in much the same manner. Often people are uncertain about what they want until they have attained it or until it is within their reach. The implication is that career development is part luck, part timing, and part fit–rarely does anyone develop a successful career purely on talent and merit. Serendipity does enter the career success equation, but one has to be in the right place at the right time. Moreover, that person must also be the right person at the right time, and he or she must fit the institution, and the institution must fit him or her.

Conclusion 6: The glass ceiling for women in senior academic positions has been broken. Another important finding was that, prior to entering the presidency, the female former presidents were supervised by men and replaced men to become the first woman president at the institution where they served. This finding is positive, because the glass ceiling was broken, even though few women were in the top administrative positions at the institution or in the community college system. Though this is an important finding, what may be of greater interest to women seeking senior leadership positions is how often a female president is succeeded by other female presidents. Once an institution has had a female president, is it more or less likely to hire another woman as president? The answer to this question may provide insight into how female community college presidents are perceived by their institutions.

As the study concluded, additional information was revealed that shows an increase in the number of female community college presidents serving this southeastern system. This information means there is hope that more women will be identified and chosen to serve in this senior administrative position. Also, this increase in the numbers of female community college presidents indicates that more administrative positions are now available and open to the possibility of having other women move into those positions.

Many findings in the study were positive. However, these women did report barriers, such as gender stereotyping and the selection of sameness, at the time they were serving as presidents. Conclusion 7: Many different kinds of experiences in higher education are being substituted for any and all the projected rungs on the ladder. This finding suggests a recognition of the multiplicity of roles and experiences that may prepare an individual for academic leadership. There are grounds in this study to argue that the selection of senior administrators has not been entirely benign toward women. And there is some evidence to suggest that the preference to employ those who tend to "look like me" may not be entirely effective or efficient when considering the total pool of those who have administrative skills and experience. In the face of growing demands for enhanced institutional effectiveness, this tendency is likely to change and is changing in the system where this study was conducted, as there are currently 8 female community college presidents.

Conclusion 8: Members of search committees and boards need to do more to increase women's representation in senior administration. For this increase in the numbers of female community college presidents to continue, search committees and boards need to have clearer ideas of the kinds of knowledge, skills, and understanding they are seeking in candidates for senior administrative positions. They need to know how to elicit the appropriate information about the candidates' experience, leadership styles, and career aspirations, which means that search committees and boards need to be more sophisticated about administrators' career patterns and organizational needs in order to enable them to look beyond institutional kinship networks.

Today, as affirmative action ebbs away, college leaders must find new avenues to ensure that recruitment and hiring practices in community college systems in this southeastern state do not exclude women. With respect to diversity, the data indicate that more effort is needed if women are to have greater opportunities to participate in academic administration at the highest levels. Moreover, since current female incumbents do not appear to differ in most respects from the background qualifications of their male counterparts, there is room for more vigorous recruitment and career encouragement of women.

Summary

This study informs our knowledge on women's career development in the community colleges. However, I cannot say that every woman who pursues a career as a community college president will act as these women did. One of the limitations of naturalistic inquiry is that research findings cannot be used to predict or control. Instead, the data are used to inform our knowledge on the complexities of human behavior. Not every woman will act in the same manner as these female former presidents did because they have not shared all of the same experiences. In essence, my role was not to smooth off the rough edges of each of these women's stories to get to a norm and to generalize. Very few, women, or men for that matter, fit the norm or go about developing their lives via the norm. My job as the researcher was not to look for certainty or answers to create a framework for all women's career development. My job was to uncover meaning in the career development experiences of these women.

What I have learned does have value and is an important contribution to the scholarship on women. Achievement-related conflicts, the nature of the administrative hierarchy, the nature of community colleges, and other factors all worked together mutually to give shape to the former president's careers. These themes and interpretations can be transformed to similar contexts. Other women can learn from these respondents' lives and careers.

Clearly, the three women who participated in this study are achievers. They were and are dedicated to the community colleges and have worked diligently to ensure that these institutions remain the colleges of the people. They are bright, courageous women who stepped beyond internalized barriers to break free of the dominant culture.

Essentially, this dissertation is their story. My task, of merely teasing out what was important and identifying common themes and patterns, was much easier than the climb these women took to the top of the administrative ladder. These women are role models, serving as inspirations to the next generation of aspiring women professionals. At the beginning of the 21st century, we can acknowledge and pay tribute to these women who took a dream deferred and made it a reality.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to present a written portrait of the career development experiences of three female former community college presidents and the self-perceived influences on them as they sought and gained entry into the community college presidency. The results of this study indicate that the naturalistic paradigm provided thick descriptions of respondents' experiences and beliefs. Given the limitations of this study, I would suggest that future researchers consider addressing the following issues:

1. Using the naturalistic paradigm, researchers might study male former community college presidents to determine similarities or differences in their perceptions of factors or circumstances influencing their pursuit of the presidency.

2. Future researchers may explore the career development experiences of female community college presidents who are currently serving as president to examine their self-perceptions of the influences leading to their chief leadership position.

3. Further research may explore the early childhood and mother/daughter relationships and father/daughter relationships as they relate to preparing one for leadership and influencing career development.

4. Strong educational influences were apparent for all three respondents. Future research might provide parenting information on values, motivation, and incentives that influence young people to respect and appreciate educational opportunities.

5. The benefits of cultivating mentoring relationships for leaders may be explored by future researchers to determine if such mentoring is taking place now that there are women in leadership roles and what impact that mentoring may have on future leaders. In addition, further studies could be conducted to investigate the impact of establishing mentoring relationships early in life and how it may influences the development self-esteem and self-concept.

6. A study of the frequency, nature, and gender differences of mentoring relationships could be undertaken with different subjects, such as women in the pipeline to the presidency; presidents of community colleges in other states; minorities other than women.

7. In this dissertation, women were studied who, as Vaughan (1989a) put it, "won the presidential sweepstakes" (p. 22). Those who have not had the opportunity, or who have applied and not been chosen for a presidency, might offer different responses. Future research may explore qualitatively the career development experiences and career paths of those who have sought but not been chosen to serve as a community college president.

8. These former presidents reported mostly positive effects of their mentoring experience. A longitudinal study or a more in-depth study might yield more information about possible negative effects of mentoring experiences.

9. None of the former presidents in this study reported that her mentorships had occurred as a result of formal mentoring programs. Are these programs helpful to aspiring presidents or are they too artificial? A comparison of mentoring relationships that occur because of a natural selection versus those from a formal program could be studied.

10. The women in this study indicated that women in higher education administration are still prey to individuals in the field who not only harbor outdated ideas of gender roles and abilities but who have the power to hinder and possibly bar qualified women from achieving their career goals. Other research might include an examination of the hiring practices of the boards of trustees. One could look specifically at the gender make-up of the board members who serve the community colleges in this state where there has been an increase in the number of female presidents appointed to see if there is a correlation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

Letter of Invitation to Participate in the Study

Date

Former President
Community College (Address)
Southeast, USA

Dear ----------:

Female community college presidents are one of the most significant groups of leaders in higher education today. I invite you, as a former community college president, to assist me in learning more about women's perceptions and enactment of community college leadership.

I am a graduate student at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina, working with Dr. Jim Burrow and Dr. Peter Hessling. The subject of this doctoral research is *A Sociological Multiple Life History Study of Three Female Former Community College Presidents in a Southeastern System.*

In recent years, higher education research has increasingly focused on women in higher education. However, most of these investigations have been quantitative, documenting the numbers and career patterns of women in academe. Few studies have examined female leaders' self-perceptions and the circumstances or factors they believe allowed them to become community college presidents and that presented challenges to them in attaining the presidency.

Your time commitment would be small—three interviews, lasting approximately 1 hour each. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact me at (919) 870-9108. If you wish to participate, please read and sign the enclosed informed consent form, then return it to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelop provided.

After receiving your signed consent form, I will contact you to arrange a time to meet. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Angela Ballentine

North Carolina State University
Informed Consent Form

A Sociological Multiple Life History Study of Three Female Former Community College Presidents in a Southeastern State

Principle Investigator Faculty Sponsors: Dr. James Burrow, Dr. Peter Hesling

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to present a written portrait of the career development experiences of the three female former community college presidents with respect to your ascendancy to the presidency. The focus of the study will be to identify the factors and circumstances that influenced your decision to seek the community college presidency by examining the self-perceptions of your career development experiences. The proposed research is important because this study will contribute to the existing literature on women in higher education administration and women in community college senior administration by presenting more personal and historical information about women who have served as community college presidents.

I consent to the following:

> I will be interviewed on three separate occasions for approximately 1 hour each interview. I will answer questions about the circumstances or factors that influenced my decision to seek the community college presidency by discussing my perceptions of my career development experiences with respect to my ascendancy to the presidency.
>
> The information obtained in the interviews will be used solely for a doctoral dissertation in higher education administration (Ed.D.) from North Carolina State University.
>
> All of the responses offered in the interview process will be kept confidential to protect my right to privacy.
>
> I will be assigned a pseudonym and referred to by these codes in all written texts. School names and locations will be similarly disguised.
>
> Written reports may entail the use of quoted material. Only Angela Ballentine will have access to the consent form that links me to my pseudonym.
>
> My participation in the study is strictly voluntary. I may decline to participate without penalty. If I decide to participate, I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. If I withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, my data will be returned to me or destroyed.
>
> With my permission, the interview will be tape recorded, so that my perceptions are accurately portrayed in the study's results.
>
> I understand that the information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study, unless I specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link me to the study.
>
> I agree that information obtained from this research may be used only for the publication or educational purposes of this research.

> If I have questions pertaining to the study, I may contact the researcher, Angela Ballentine, at (919) 870-9108. If I feel that I have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or my rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, I may contact the Chairperson of the NCSU Human Subjects Committee, Box 7906, NCSU Campus.

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's signature: ______________________________ **Date:** ______________

Investigator's signature: ___________________________ **Date:** ______________

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

I. Demographic Information

1. Title of current position.
2. Years in current position.
3. Years in higher education administration.
4. Previous administrative positions.
5. Educational level.
6. Future professional goals.
7. Age range:

   30-35 35-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 56-60

II. Interview Guide

A. The following questions seek to gather information on the *specific aptitudes and academic abilities* you perceive as having been important in your ascendency to the presidency:

   1. What influences led to your career decision to become a community college president?
   2. What educational experiences did you find important in your life?
   3. What is leadership to you?
   4. In your experience as a community college president, what skills did you find most useful?
   5. What advice would you give other aspiring women with regard to useful skills?

      –leadership skills

      –administrative skills
   6. Describe to me what a typical day would be like as a community college president. What skills were needed to be effective?

7. How would you describe your readiness to become a community college president? (strengths and weaknesses)

B. The following questions seek to identify the *personal factors* you perceive to be major influences in the pursuit of the community college presidency:

1. How did your career path affect your personal life? (prior to and during the presidency)
2. How did your personal life affect your career path?
3. What role, if any, did self-confidence have in your pursuit of the presidency?
4. What has been the most significant challenge you faced in your career?

C. The following questions seek information regarding *institutional and professional factors* you perceive to have been influential in your pursuit of the community college presidency:

1. How would you describe the institutional climate toward female administrators at the college where you served as president? (At the time you served). Did the climate help or hinder your career advancement? (Probe)
2. As a former president, what changes are necessary to increase the number of females in top administrative positions?
3. What was the most significant challenge you faced professionally in attaining the presidency?

D. The following questions seek to identify your perception of factors related to *mentoring* that influenced your decision to pursue the community college presidency.

1. Tell me about your mentors.
2. If you were mentored, what effect did mentoring have on your career?

- –early life
- –before the presidency
- –after the presidency

3. To what extent were you mentored?
4. What was the nature of the mentoring relationship(s)?

One Final Question:

Are there any other issues related to your experiences as you sought and gained entry to the community college presidency that you would like to address at this time?